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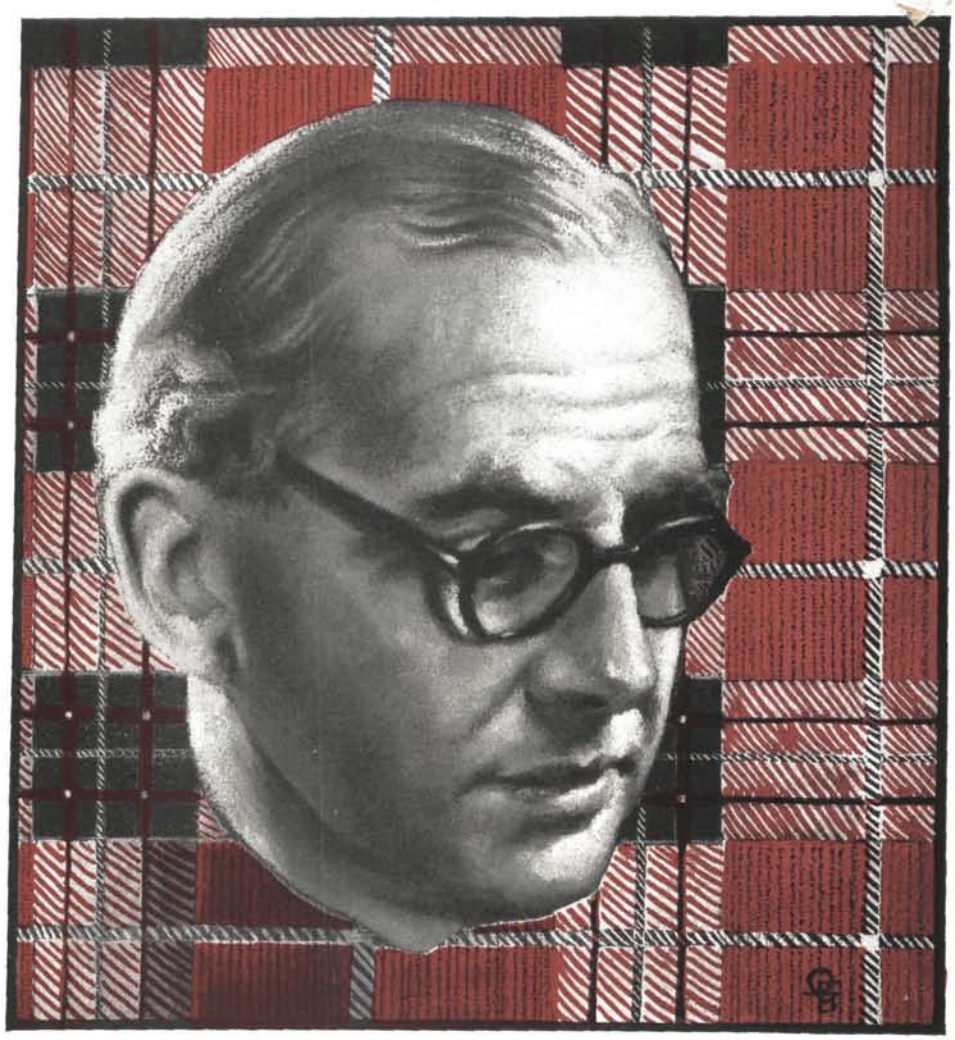

Guy McCrone, author of "Red Plush." (See page 13)

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November 22, 1947

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THE SATURDAY REVIEW OF LITERATURE, published weekly by the Saturday Review Associates, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y. Harrison Smith, President; J. R. Cominsky, Executive Vice President and Treasurer; Norman Cousins, Vice President; Amy Loveman, Secretary; Lilian Grannon, Assistant Treasurer; Bert Garmise, Circulation Director; Arthur Bodenheimer, Assistant Circulation Director. Subscriptions $6 a year; $7 in Canada. Member of Audit Bureau of Circulations. Printed in U. S. Vol. XXX, No. 47, November 22, 1947. Entered as second class matter at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the Act of March 3, 1879. Indexed in the "Readers' Guide to Periodical Literature." Entire issue, Copyright, 1947, by Saturday Review Associates, Inc.

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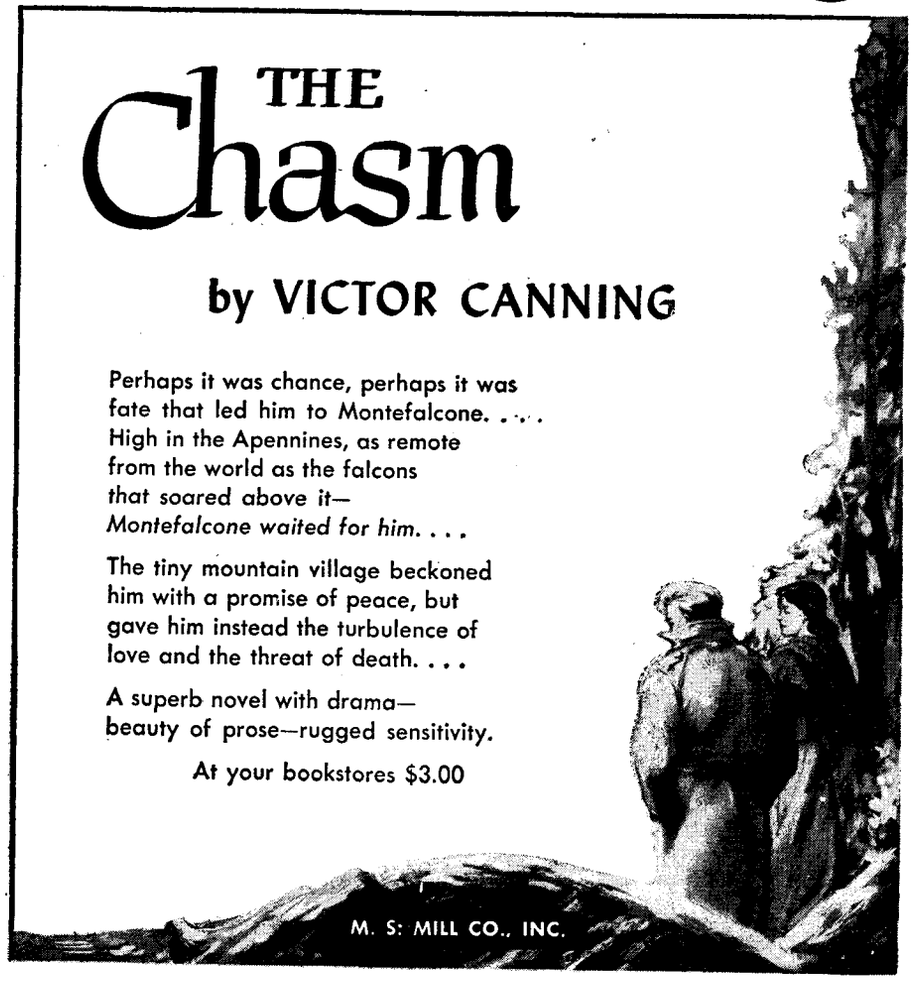

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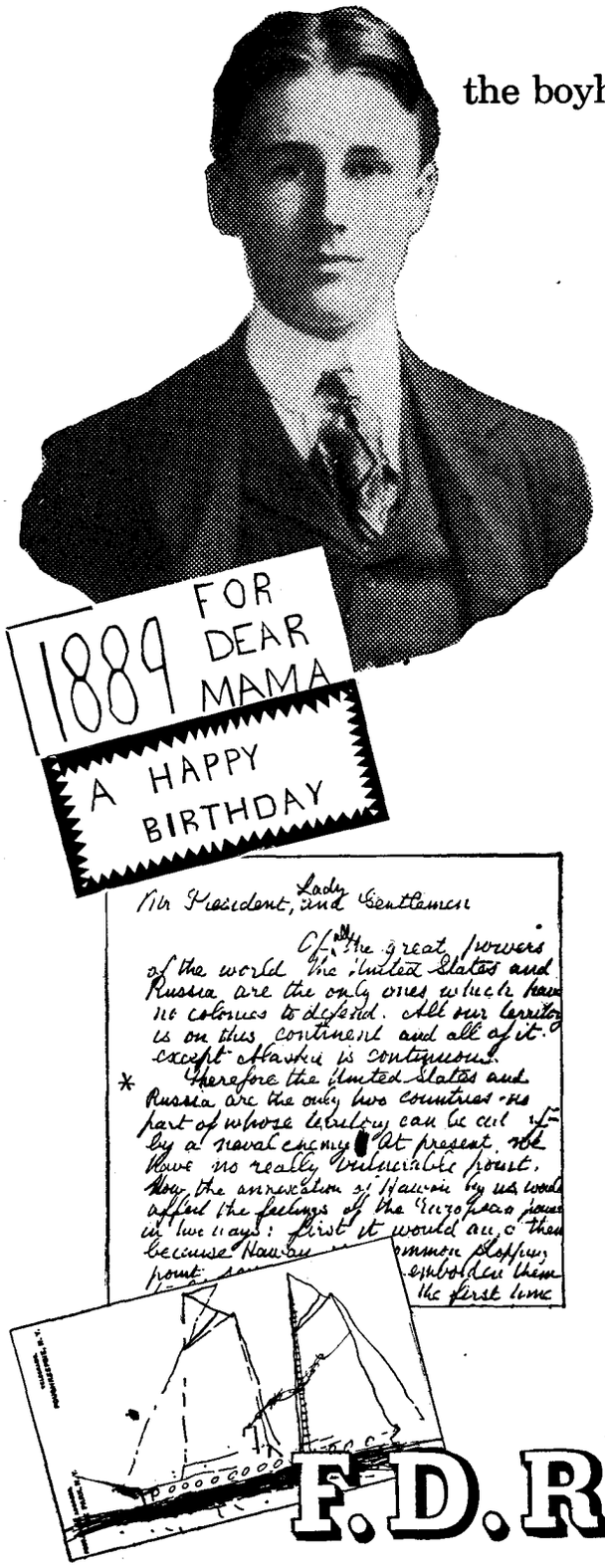
1889 FOR DEAR MAMA
A HAPPY BIRTHDAY
Mr President, Lady and Gentlemen
Of the great powers of the world the United States and Russia are the only ones which have no colonies to defend. All our territory is on this continent and all of it except Alaska is contiguous.
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TRADE Winds

"THE CUSTOMERS ALWAYS WRITE"

A LETTER FROM PERCY WAXMAN, veteran member of *Cosmopolitan*'s editorial staff, is always welcome. Here is his latest:

I submit a few items of Definite Unimportance to initiate a Show-Off Department in your Trade Winds column which you might want to use on tired days:

1. The words of the songs that are sung in a musical comedy are known as lyrics, and the person who writes them is called a lyricist. But he shouldn't be. Oddly enough there is no such word as lyricist in the dictionary. It should be lyrist. Do you think Tin Pan Alley will take this lying down?

2. When a man writes a story and signs it with a name other than his own we say he writes under a nom de plume. But there is no such term in French. What we mean to say is that he writes under a nom de guerre. (Although why we don't stick to English and say pseudonym is beyond me.) Incidentally, you will have a couple of well-raised eyebrows if you look up the origin of nom de guerre.

3. Here's an odd one. When the well-fed business tycoon sits back at the end of his dinner and calls for a demi-tasse he thinks he is talking French. But he isn't. Demi-tasse, meaning a small cup of coffee, doesn't exist in French although oddly enough, owing to its persistent use by Americans, it is now in almost general use in Paris and other French cities popular with travelers.

4. Did you know that the word mayonnaise (and the sauce itself) was first invented in Minorca. The chef who first made the sauce called it Mahonese after Mahon, the capital of Minorca. Later it was gallicized. (For extra measure, may I say that Mahon was named for Hannibal's brother?)

That will be about all for today. . . .

FROM ARNOLD SCHULMAN, of the Authors' Workshop for Vets:

After six months of free office space at the Veterans' Service Center on Park Avenue, we were informed that we'd have to move because of the general retrenchment in veteran facilities. A couple of us trotted breathlessly about and finally located space at 136 West 42nd Street and one of the boys miraculously arranged for a truck to move us. So, with a slight drizzle beginning to fall, we immediately transposed our furniture to the street.

A short while later the truck arrived and we hastily loaded it, trying to ignore some strange, unpleasant odor about us. Then a quick glance at the side of the truck told us that we had engaged a fish truck to move our valuables, including a large monstrous sofa, once the favorite of Alexander Woollcott. Believe it or not, we could actually hear Woollcott's ghost swearing as we rattled down Park Avenue. Oh well, at least the local traffic gave us a wide berth, but we're still startled by the picture of Woollcott sneering with a herring between his teeth.

On the serious side, we want to mention a few facts about our organization and our purpose for existence. We are a non-profit group designed to help veterans both in and out of hospitals who are interested in creative writing. We review, criticize, and try to market those manuscripts which our board of advisers, comprised of leading editors, publishers, and writers, think salable. This service is all free.

We began two and a half years ago at St. Alban's Hospital, then we branched out to Halloran and Kingsbridge hospitals. When the war ended and most of the patients were discharged it was decided to continue with the program, not as a crutch, but as an aid to beginning writers. Our aim, in addition to helping the veteran, is also to try to develop fresh talent for the declining literary field. We are supported entirely by donations and will appreciate any helpful publicity you may give us. . . .

H. A. ROGERS of Hollywood, Florida, writes, "Most big organizations have famous trade marks. I wonder how many publishers' marks can be identified readily by *SRL* readers?"

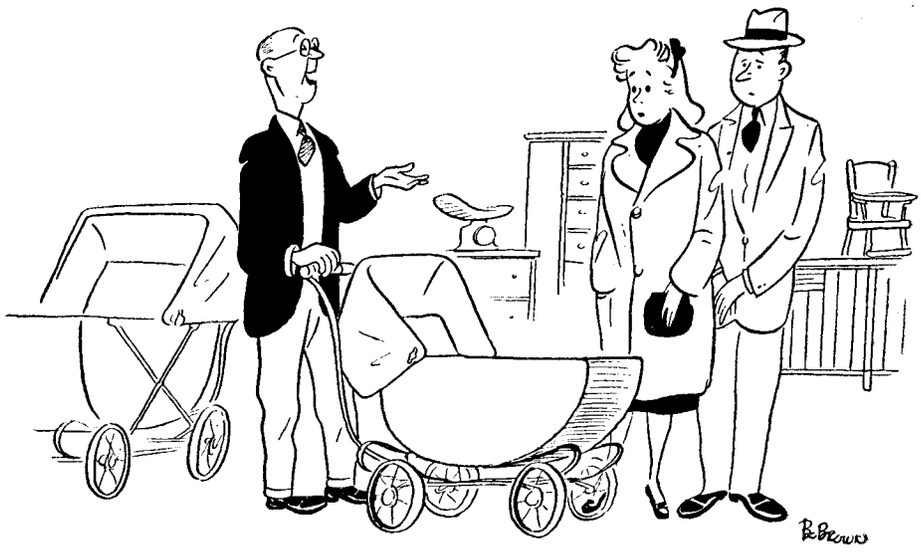
Mr. Rogers lists the following (the answers will be found farther down in this column):

1. A running dog. 2. A tree. 3. A piper and a fish. 4. A ship in full sail. 5. Two hands and a torch. 6. A two-story house flanked by two wings. 7. An eagle. 8. An anchor. 9. A man sowing. 10. A column topped by a ball and a perching eagle. 11. An owl, whose body is the letter "O." 12. A lamp with a book for background. . . .

LAURA WOODBERRY, of Beverly, Mass., with an eye to windward for the outlandish fashions some women have fallen for this season, calls to mind a sermon preached by a wise Reverend Wilkinson at the nuptials of Lord Hay in 1607, and reprinted as a footnote in an old edition of John Milton's "Samson Agonistes." Dr. Wilkinson took his text from Proverbs, XXXI, 14: "She is like a merchant shippe, she bringeth her food from afar," and continued, "But of all qualities, a woman must not have one quality of a ship, and that is too much rigging. Oh! what a wonder it is to see a ship under saile, with her tacklings and her masts, and her top-gallants, with her upper deckes, and her nether deckes, and so bedeckt with her streamers, flags, and ensigns, and I know not what; yea, but a world of wonders it is to see a woman created in God's image, so miscreate oft times and deformed with her French, her Spanish, and her foolish fashions, that He that made her, when He lookes upon her, shall hardlie know her, with her plumes, her fans, and a silken vizard, with a ruffe like a saile, yea, a ruffe like a rainbow, with a feather in her cap, like a flag in her top, to tell, I think, which way the winde will blowe." . . .

FROM RICHARD P. MILLER, of Friends House, London:

Trade Winds readers may be interested in this paragraph from a



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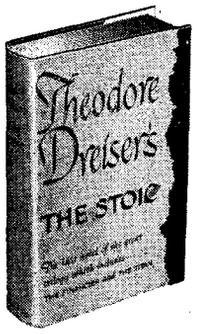

NOT quite two years ago, one of America's greatest and most revered novelists died, leaving behind him a wealth of important contributions to American letters. As MAX LERNER said in an editorial for *PM:* "To read of Theodore Dreiser's death was like saying good-bye to a whole age."

Theodore Dreiser performed a unique service to the American novel with his *Sister Carrie* and *An American Tragedy,* now recognized as classics. A leading interpreter of American society, he wrote succeeding novels which probed still more deeply into the vital social and moral problems of our day. His "Trilogy of Desire", begun with *The Financier* and *The Titan,* will stand among the greatest works written about the effect of American life on man's moral and spiritual nature.

We are now publishing for the first time the final volume of this trilogy, THE STOIC, the story of Frank Cowperwood's boldest venture, the building of the vast London underground. One of Dreiser's finest creations, Cowperwood, too, is in many ways the symbol of an age—an age of savage ambition, wealth and power—an age Dreiser brought into dynamic reality.

MARTHA MacGREGOR of the *New York Post* calls THE STOIC: "A powerful and fascinating story" . . . JAMES T. FARRELL: "THE STOIC proves once again what a great writer he was . . . his story of Cowperwood is unquestionably one of his greatest."

Ranking with Dreiser's gigantic successes, THE STOIC completes one of the enduring monuments of American literature. With it, comes your opportunity to complete your Dreiser library, to round off your collection of the significant work of a towering 20th-century novelist.

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DOUBLEDAY

student's essay on Quakerism: "The Quakers were invented in the Middle Ages by Oliver Cromwell. They are a very quiet people and never answer back. My father is a Quaker, my mother is not."

THE UNTIMELY DEATH of Poet Samuel Hoffenstein on the eve of publication of his first new book of poems in seventeen years ("Pencil in the Air," published by Doubleday) has led many to wonder whether he at least had the satisfaction of seeing finished copies of his book before he passed on. That uncertainty is cleared up by the following letter, sent to Irving Hoffman by Hoffenstein's younger brother. The occasion for the letter was a pre-publication review of "Pencil in the Air" by Hoffman, amazingly ecstatic from a critic who generally hoots to kill.

> I'm Dave, Sam's "kid" brother [wrote Hoffenstein]. I thought you would like to know what happened Saturday night previous to the Monday of our great loss.
>
> Sam phoned me in St. Paul to tell me what Irving Hoffman was going to say about the book in his column, and how deeply gratified he was about it.
>
> I was so very happy to know he saw the book, held it, and knew that the first critical comment would fulfil his deepest hopes. He valued his poetry above everything else. This new book meant so much to him! You helped make his departure happier. . . .

FROM TAYLOR CALDWELL, author of "There Was a Time":

> In Europe this summer, my husband and I crossed the Italian border into Ventimiglia, from the French Riviera, and immediately encountered the gayer, more disorderly, brighter, and more humorous atmosphere of Italy. We were obliged to leave the train for examination by the Italian Customs. While waiting in line, I saw three young Italian policemen, excessively handsome in their greenish uniforms and boots and extravagant caps. As I have always had an eye for masculine beauty, I was delighted, and I remarked quite loudly to my husband: "Oh boy, look at those good-looking kids! They ought to be in Hollywood." Business with the customs proceeded, and we sat down to await the train which was to take us to Genoa. The three policemen strolled by, profiles well exhibited, and I admired them again. We got up to stroll about the station, and then I noticed that wherever I looked, I encountered the profiles of the boys, marching past gravely and slowly. Becoming suspicious at last, I asked an interpreter if the boys understood English. "Oh, yes," he answered brightly, "they were all born in Brooklyn."

THE PUBLISHERS' marks listed above by H. A. Rogers belong to the following firms: 1. Knopf. 2. Appleton-Century. 3. Houghton Mifflin. 4. Viking. 5. Harper. 6. Random House. 7. Morrow. 8. Doubleday. 9. Simon & Schuster. 10. Little, Brown. 11. Holt. 12. Scribner. . . .

FROM RABBI MILTON STEINBERG:

> Here is a story, almost a parable, for any author who finds himself, as I do just now, midway with a published book, in that passage in which everyone — critics, colleagues, and friends — assails him on every score, from integrity and intelligence to literacy; and who in consequence has begun to wonder why he ever ventured authorship to begin with.
>
> It would seem that an old-world Jew once went seeking a childhood friend, now resident in another vicinity, and risen to the dizzy eminence of presidency of his local synagogue. Unacquainted with his friend's exact address, he reached the general neighborhood of his destination and proceeded to ask questions.
>
> "Do you know," he inquired of a patriarch passing by, "where Moses Goldberg lives?"
>
> "Moses Goldberg? Do you mean the president of the synagogue, the ignoramus who cannot quote a verse from Scripture accurately, let alone from Rabbinics? Two blocks from here."
>
> The two blocks traversed, the stranger addressed a second inquiry, this time to a young man.
>
> "Moses Goldberg?" came the reply, "the president of the synagogue? That hypocrite! It's people like him who drive young people like me from religion. Second house on the right."
>
> Arrived at the indicated house, the stranger inquired of a child as to the floor of his friend's residence.
>
> "Moses Goldberg?" he got in response, "the president? That killjoy, that sourpuss? Apartment 3B."
>
> Sometime later, the first flurry of greetings over, the visitor remarked: "I see, Goldberg, you've become president of a synagogue."
>
> "You know how it is," Goldberg smiled deprecatingly, "who doesn't like a little glory in his life?"

THANK YOU ALL very kindly. Next week I will write this column myself. As a crooner at the Carnival Night Club remarked the other evening, "I have had many requests—but I'm going to sing anyhow."

BENNETT CERF.

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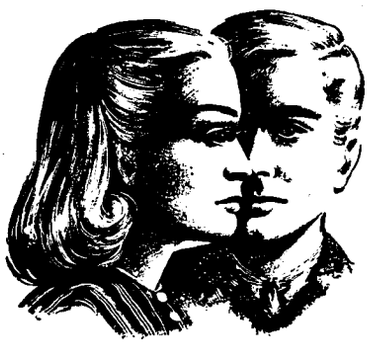
"It is written with such unobtrusive grace that it might be Mr. Pember's tenth novel instead of his first... As a love story it is convincing and tender."—MALCOLM COWLEY, *N. Y. Herald Tribune*

"His publisher suggests that Mr. Pember may be compared with E. M. Forster and Henry James, and the statement is by no means as far-fetched as such blurbs usually are. His novel is a rewarding literary experience."—JOSEPH HENRY JACKSON, *San Francisco Chronicle*



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"Such an avoidance of partisanship, so much tolerance, and so keen a penetration of motives, together with a highly personal sense of the interest and worth of every man alive, combine to distinguish the author from most of his contemporaries and to earn his book respect." —IRIS BARRY, *N. Y. Herald Tribune Book Review*

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People Who Write

IT HAS recently become fashionable to think of authors as people, and generally speaking the idea is working out very well. Rarely today is the author presented as WRITER only. You may secretly miss those uncompromising old photographs of gentlemen in wing collars, seated in straight-back chairs, poising a quill and looking vaguely into the distance, but it takes courage to say so. Who would not feel compelled to favor today's version of the great man: checked lumber-jack, wife on shoulder, pipe in mouth, children at knee, glass of distinction in hand?

This is part of the business of authors being people. It's the most obvious surface part, but it's interesting. In an age in which all public figures live in Bell jars, it's also normal. The good thing in this welter of personal publicity is that you sometimes find out about the person behind a book and know the book better because of it.

We've been mulling over recent meetings with writers on our current list and thinking about some of the odd, small, personal things that bring bonus interest to a working day. We had that familiar, tentative, all-thumbs feeling about meeting a certain distinguished scientist who has written important nonfiction. He has a shock of white hair, an uncompromising integrity, and he is in love with Hedy Lamarr. Someday *he* hopes to meet *her*.

A top-notch fiction expert on our list sold brewer's malt in Germany before the war. When he came to this country as a refugee he and a friend made black-out shades by hand and installed them in bars around New York City. He likes to tell about the job that took a whole hard day. At 5 o'clock he and his partner finished installing their blind and stood waiting to be paid. Just to kill time our man tried the shade. The pulleys didn't work. He claims it's still hanging where it hung that day, but he doesn't expect to be paid for it.

One of the most eminent and most loved poets living today uses his not inconsiderable imagination to delay the dreadful moment of settling down to work. When he can't put it off any longer he runs away to the woods and gets lost. Another man, a novelist, is more interested in losing other people than himself. To that end he has rented a chicken coop on the tip of Long Island.

Still another writer – one of our most rugged – is an ex-football player who did *not* get his B.A., M.A., Ph.D. in physical culture. Currently a Professor of History, he is candid and good fun, two highly desirable traits in his particular non-fiction field. Our editor in charge of titles had a chat with him shortly after the publication of his recent biography of William Allen White. The two were mildly talking plans for the future and our author said, "What would you think of doing a life of Connie Boswell, . . . calling it, of course, Johnson's Life of Boswell?"

These individuals are writers. (Or vice-versa.) They're harder to keep track of than old-time gentlemen and lady authors, but they're just as much the genuine article – maybe even more. They write sound nonfiction and real poetry. They write novels with dash and swagger, or with tenderness and simple eloquence. They're people in the sense of a local saying we've always liked: one we first heard from a vaudeville performer in Buffalo, New York. When she knew someone was on the level all the way down the line she would say "That's people." It's the highest compliment we know.

HENRY HOLT AND COMPANY

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The Saturday Review of Literature

Tripe, Inc.

Confessions of an Anonymous Opiate Eater

EDITOR'S NOTE: *An author, who wishes to remain anonymous because he would rather not be known for the "tripe" he writes, here records his honest reactions to the diagnoses of American writing contributed to* SRL *by Louis Bromfield, Conrad Aiken, and Margaret Halsey. In* SRL *Sept. 13, Mr. Bromfield maintained that mediocre writing is on the increase, but insisted that a popular writer need not be a bad one. In* SRL *Sept. 20, Conrad Aiken hopefully announced that "the opportunity for the American writer is now unparalleled in all history," but even he was a bit uneasy about "the highly developed commercialization of writing" which makes it almost "too easy" to write. Margaret Halsey, in* SRL *Oct. 18, challenged the writer who would preserve his integrity to face up to the threat of a moneyed society instead of backing away from it. When there's easy money in writing—say for the slicks—it's a great temptation to put aside for awhile that Great American Novel you've been planning while you make something to live on. And if you succumb, what happens to your standards, your integrity as a writer? In an attempt to answer their questions, "Mr. X" has written the following article.*

I WRITE tripe. My name appears from time to time in almost any of the "slick" magazines—those publications with smooth-looking maidens in full color on the cover and shiny pages where, to paraphrase Sheridan, "a narrow rivulet of text meanders through a wide meadow of advertising." My stuff keeps maidens in brassières from getting mixed up with gentlemen in tweeds contentedly smoking America's popular cigarette. This act of chaperonage seems to be its prime function.

Most of my contributions are fiction —fluffy stuff in which boy invariably meets girl, loses, and then gets her. The way I do it, the whole thing is on a humorous level. Even so, it's pretty thin, and I feel ashamed of being responsible for the million man hours or so that are going to be wasted in the reading of every story I write.

All right, then, why don't I write something better? Or why not get into something respectable like grave digging?

The trouble is that I like to write. For better or worse it is my life. I have been writing since I was old enough to hold a pencil, and though I have done other things — university teaching, editing, government administration, lecturing, laboratory work and, after a fashion, farming, I still think that writing is my line—or my fate.

Like many other young idealists, I left college with the firm intention of writing great novels, novels that would easily surpass Sinclair Lewis whose glory then in the early Thirties had begun to wane, rising to the level of Tolstoy, Flaubert, Dickens. In order to live, meanwhile, I took a teaching job in a foreign university. That experience abroad provided the background for my first novel—a moderate best seller, a book-club choice in England, a work reprinted abroad and translated into foreign tongues. It was an immature work, I am sure—I have never dared reread it—but it received enough acclaim to assure me that I was on the right track.

There followed three other novels, but none of them made enough money

to support my family while I devoted myself to writing. It was still necessary to earn a living at something else and to write in what time I could borrow from a busy life.

My work improved, if not the income from it. In the third novel I developed new experimental techniques. It was a pretty good book—judging by current standards I might even say very good. It was enthusiastically reviewed, and even now after ten years it brings letters of almost pathetic gratitude from people who somehow or other discover themselves and the world in it. My fourth novel made the mistake of showing that even in time of war some of the enemy might be spiritually on our side and ought in any case to be considered as people. It was praised, dramatized on the radio, but not bought.

Then war put an end to writing for four years.

When it was over, I decided that I was going to make a living at fiction, come hell or high water. Ironically, a generous grant was forthcoming for the writing of a non-fiction book, and for a year I was able to devote myself to that, with a few evening hours left for fiction. But the result was like the teaching-writing combination—too much intellectual effort engaged on other projects to permit the devotion of spirit that must go into a fine novel.

One day I happened to pick up a copy of a slick magazine. I had never looked inside the covers of one before. I read a short story. Then I read all the stories in the "book." It looked easy, and I had heard that the income was good. Why not write for the slicks in order to live, thus freeing myself for the serious writing that I felt compelled to do?

I tried it, and it worked—perhaps because I had traveled a good deal and was able with novel places and customs to freshen the old formula on which most magazine stories are built. By writing in humorous vein I was able to amuse readers and save my own self-respect, for the slick stories

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which authors and readers take seriously are, for the most part, just sad. A slick story, written in a few days, made as much money as one of my novels which had taken every spare moment for a year. Half a dozen sales would keep the wolf at a very respectful distance for a year.

Well, I turned out four stories in fairly short order, the receipts from which provided security for eight months of uninterrupted serious writing.

Then, with a sigh of relief, I turned to the big task—the writing of the book that was going to establish me as a novelist of importance. I had the story in mind, and the theme. I had been planning it all through the war years when there had been no time for writing. It was to show Americans to themselves, to make them see the meaning of the conflict that runs through their lives and their history; in this dangerous hour to make them understand the forces that had made them and made them great, and to save them from the confusion and error and maybe disintegration in which they were caught. It was a family story, yet full of symbols bearing universal significance. It was to have humor, excitement, misunderstanding, and reconciliation, loss and recovery, good and evil, youth and age, and in the end the peace of understanding.

But even as I began to write, there was a difficulty. Great fiction, it seemed to me, must be popular as Dickens was popular. A test of its greatness was the universality of its appeal. I had learned how to write for a modern popular audience—but at what cost! Did fiction, in order to succeed in this comic-book age, have to be written that way in order to be read? If I wrote novels as I wrote slick stories what would become of the standards I had set for myself—restraint and channeling of emotion, morality built into the fabric of the work without preaching, a grasp of universal truths?

NO, it would not do to seek popularity if the standard had to be what a slick editor would accept. I would have to stick to my own standards and take a chance on attracting an audience.

But even as I wrote, the compulsion was on me to sensationalize. Something kept happening to my judgment of the materials I had chosen. When I planned to have the hero's home burn down, I was no longer certain whether this was a necessary outcome of a story having its own internal momentum and pattern, or whether I was building a fire so that people would have to turn and look at it. I knew that great novelists had burned down plenty of houses in their times, but was my incendiarism as acceptable as Jane Eyre's?

Similarly with people. When I let a humorous character into the story and found him expanding and throwing himself around, as it were, was I cheapening my book or enhancing it? Was this fellow someone I had met on my way to the slicks? Or was he another Micawber, a Sarah Gamp, a Pickwick? I could not tell.

More seriously, the import of my book was to be expressed through a quite elaborate symbolism in which each character represented some aspect of American life, political, economic, or moral. Lying behind the surface story of people loving and marrying and dying was the image of a nation developing conflicting ways of life, conflicting political ideas, conflicting moralities. To me it seemed important that fiction should have depth and richness of allusion, that the novel in America had grown too smooth on the surface without gaining anything in depth, that it was time to dig down instead of spreading out.

But as I attempted to work out this elaborate fabric, I was filled with doubt. Who would read, who would understand? Certainly not the millions who read my short stories. Was I, after all, on the right track?

There was nothing to do but go ahead, with the full realization that what seemed so important to me—the serious interpretation in fiction of our national life—might not gain any more readers than my previous books had done, while my light and frivolous creations gained me both money and audience. Perhaps by this time I had spoiled myself for the high achievement I had aimed at for seventeen years. How could I *know*?

Hundreds of American writers have faced the same dilemma. But when it hits you personally, its significance, its terrible import becomes apparent with all the force of novelty.

First of all, since the ego always comes first, is the blow to one's self-evaluation. You know, the reviews of earlier books tell you, that you have something to say worth listening to. Yet the failure to win a wide audience keeps hammering home a different message until you wonder, is tripe the only thing I can do well? Since it pays, since it satisfies readers while serious work does little of the one and not so very much of the other, why bother? Why not write a half dozen stories a year and loaf the rest of the time? Why keep trying? Why such expenditure of spirit for so little return?

Far more important than the personal doubt, however, is the doubt and mistrust of a civilization that consistently refuses to take an adult attitude toward the problems it generates—that turns away into a slick fairyland of comfort, flippancy, smart clothes, and empty heads.

The humorous stories in the slicks are in a superficial sense harmless. They make fun of the very boy-meets-girl formula they follow. Their humor says, in effect, "This is all a game, and we're only here to give you a chuckle or two. You can forget us as soon as you turn the page."

BUT the serious stories are indeed more serious. Read a few slick stories and you will enter a world millions of Americans must be living in. Read them week after week, as the devotees do, and you would probably begin to believe the ridiculous postulates of that world: "Love" is what really matters in life, and love is a glandular condition leading to purely physical ends or, worse, to spuriously sentimental ones. Such love solves all problems; or it is the only problem. A young lady's sole mission in life is to catch a healthy male whose economic status is higher than her own. To do this she must look like a photogra-

(*Continued on page* 48)

My Current Reading

"Bedside Reading" would be a more accurate designation for the reading list contributed to *SRL* this week by **Edward Johnson,** general manager of the Metropolitan Opera Company. We are told that the books listed below are those on Mr. Johnson's bedside table at the moment:

PEACE OF MIND, by Joshua Loth Liebman (Simon & Schuster)

OTHER SIDE OF THE RECORD, by Charles O'Connell (Knopf)

MONA LISA'S MUSTACHE, by T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings (Knopf)

SPEAKING FRANKLY, by James F. Byrnes (Harper)

PRINCE OF FOXES, by Samuel Shellabarger (Little, Brown)

THE MONEYMAN, by Thomas B. Costain (Doubleday)

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The World. *The controversy between Walter Lippmann and "Mr. X," commonly thought to be George Kennan, the State Department's ace Russian expert, underlines the influential position held by a top columnist in this country. Publication of "Mr X's" article in* Foreign Affairs *and in* Life *some time ago was interpreted as a State Department bid for public approval of the Truman Doctrine. Mr. Lippmann took up the challenge in the* Herald Tribune *in a series of articles on what is called "the cold war" with Russia, a term now popularly used even by the Russians. Currently Mr. Lippmann, just returned from Europe, has been writing a new series which adds factual observation to the theory of his earlier articles. Contrasting points of view may be found in Cord Meyer Jr.'s recent "Peace or Anarchy" and Louis Fischer's "Gandhi and Stalin" (reviewed in* SRL *Nov. 1 and Oct. 4 respectively).*

Atlantic Community Chest

THE COLD WAR. By Walter Lippmann. New York: Harper & Bros. 1947. 62 pp. $1.

Reviewed by FOSTER RHEA DULLES

THE controversy between Mr. Lippmann and "Mr. X" of the State Department has aroused such widespread interest that the publication of the former's syndicated articles on Russian-American relations in book form is doubly welcome. Against the background of actual developments in Europe, etching ever more sharply the contours of "The Cold War," it may not in itself be the "important historical event" proclaimed by the enthusiastic publishers. Nevertheless, recent pronouncements of foreign policy have veered somewhat in the direction pointed by Mr. Lippmann and changing circumstances have if anything strengthened the cogency of what he has to say.

The main thesis of his argument is that a policy of seeking to contain Soviet Russia by building up unassailable barriers in the border states, extending support to "constantly shifting geographical and political points corresponding to the shifts and maneuvers of Soviet policy," is nothing less than "a strategic monstrosity." Realistically accepting the implications of today's tragic reversion to power politics, he agrees with Mr. X that Russia is amenable only to contrary force, but to try to apply such force along the lines projected in the Truman Doctrine is, in Mr. Lippmann's opinion, wholly impractical. It would involve the United States in foreign commitments that could not be fulfilled, dangerously dissipate our strength and weaken our position in those vital areas where we should be strongest. As all earlier readers of Mr. Lippmann will recognize, these criticisms reflect his view that in spite of the great power of the United States we cannot afford to overextend our foreign commitments, and should primarily seek to uphold our basic security zone in Western Europe. The threat of war arising out of conflict in Russia's borderlands, he declares, has already weakened the natural alliance of what he calls the Atlantic Community.

This attitude leads him to approve the Marshall Plan, which he sharply distinguishes from the Truman Doctrine, and to uphold the United Nations as the proper agency to preserve peace once it has been concluded. His own specific proposal, however, is that the United States should above all else seek to reach an agreement with Moscow that would promptly lead to the evacuation of both Russian and Anglo-American troops from Germany. Believing that the Communist threat in Europe derives largely from the advance of the Red armies to the Elbe, he is convinced that only their withdrawal can create the conditions necessary for international stability.

—*Tom Gray in the* Chicago Times.

The Anglers.

Mr. Lippmann does not hold out any guarantee that Russia will withdraw her troops from Eastern Europe, but if she obdurately refuses to reach an agreement providing for evacuation, or having done so then proceeds to violate it, the United States would at least know exactly where it stood. In that event, the proof of Russian aggression would be so clear and undebatable, Mr. Lippmann argues, that we would have no alternative other than to accept the Soviet challenge and in so doing would be in a position to bring our concentrated strength to bear where it would be most effective. His basic point, however, is that an attempt to come to an agreement with Russia by positive action holds far greater promise of peace than a negative program of containment fundamentally unworkable.

Mr. Lippmann is always lucid and persuasive. His criticism of the policy of containment and the Truman Doctrine appears to me to be entirely valid, and certainly we should exhaust every effort in trying to reach an agreement with Russia. But his own program, which he characterizes as simple and necessary, seems somehow to be over-simple. In stating that the decisive problem of our relations with the Soviet Union is "whether, when, on what conditions the Red Army can be prevailed upon to evacuate Europe," he tends to minimize the implications of Russian policy in other parts of the world, notably the Far East. It is well to be reminded that the Kremlin is heir to the imperialism of Czarist Russia as well as the exponent of world-wide communism, and that the power of the Red Army rather than the ideology of Karl Marx is primarily responsible for Russian expansion today. At the same time, there are risks in over-emphasizing the role of power politics in our rivalry with Russia. The situation in Italy and France, where Red armies are not immediately at hand as in Eastern Europe to sustain national Communist Parties, suggests that the danger of a spreading communism linked to Moscow might not entirely disappear even with the evacuation of Russian troops from Europe.

A further point is that the prompt withdrawal of American troops from Europe, a necessary corollary of Russian withdrawal, might be interpreted as meaning that the United States was in reality washing its hands of the whole business and again retreating into isolation. This is at least a danger which perhaps Mr. Lipp-

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mann does not sufficiently take into account. A new balance of power would be created, but would it necessarily secure for the United States the support of Western Europe? Or might not Europe then fall more easily into the Russian orbit?

Mr. Lippmann's essay, for all its brevity, touches on so many facets of the problem he discusses that it is perhaps hardly fair to single out one aspect of Russian-American relations that he ignores. But in his absorption with the balance of power, he does not find occasion to bring out the importance of what would appear to be an essential requisite for any enduring peace. That is the need for strengthening democracy as a dynamic answer to the appeal of communism to peoples still suffering from the devastation of war. Redressing the balance of power will avail us little in the long run unless we can so incontrovertibly prove the stability and strength of our institutions that Soviet Russia will realize she has to live at peace with us to survive.

Latin Tug-of-Peace

BATTLE FOR THE HEMISPHERE. By Edward Tomlinson. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1947. 250 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT OKIN

AS after the last war, we in this country have a tendency to push Latin America to the background in our preoccupation with Europe. Now that the fighting is over, the desperate search for raw materials slackened, the danger of enemy penetration no longer pressing, we seem to forget how important the South seemed a few years ago.

History, of course, does not repeat itself since this war ended on a high note of stunning implications. Whatever Latin America meant to us in the last war it means to us tenfold now. The distance is progressively smaller, the reliance progressively greater, the inter-relationship—by sheer circumstances—woven progressively tighter.

What has happened there since we turned to the East, where the tug-of-peace seems so much more urgent and dramatic? Mr. Tomlinson, an old Latin-American hand as writer, lecturer, and radio correspondent, sees the events in Latin America as a battle for the hemisphere, as critical and compelling as the battle for Europe. The "twin specters of communism and extreme Nazi-Fascist nationalism" are advancing rapidly and even alarmingly, he reports. Communism is increasing in Brazil, Chile, Cuba, and Venezuela and at least exists in other countries. Its purpose, he says, is to gain control over the balance of economic power in Latin America, a power which will be used against the U. S. and in the interest of the U.S.S.R.

Mr. Tomlinson does not stop with Communists, he also goes on to consider the dangers from the extreme right, a danger which tends to get lost in the current attack against communism. As he pointedly writes:

> Many of us are repeating the mistake that was made after the First World War. In the years immediately following that conflict there was almost universal concern with Russian communism. . . . Responsible resistance to its spread was complicated by many who opposed it for purely selfish reasons. Frustrated politicians . . . military men in the defeated countries, . . . all kinds of demagogues leaped to the defense of their people against the "new menace."
>
> Throughout the world, the hue and cry over communism became so great that most people tended to overlook the fact that some of the forces which were supposed to be battling against it were just as dangerous. . . . Today, after the close of another great war, we once again find communism a great threat to the Western way of life

(*Continued on page* 45)

Your Literary I.Q.

By Howard Collins

LIFE'S FITFUL FEVER

A. C. Palmer, of Pomfret Center, Conn., a frequent contributor to this department, offers you twenty quotations about Life. Can you match up each one with the poet who wrote it? Allowing five points for each correct identification, a score of sixty is par, seventy is very good, and eighty or better is excellent. Answers are on page 28.

1. I cannot rest from travel: I will drink Life to the lees. ( ) Barbauld
2. One crowded hour of glorious life
   Is worth an age without a name. ( ) Bourdillon
3. Nothing in his life
   Became him like the leaving of it. ( ) Browning
4. Life is a jest, and all things show it;
   I thought so once, but now I know it. ( ) Byron
5. Yet the light of a whole life dies
   When love is done. ( ) Campbell
6. Man's love is of man's life a thing apart,
   'Tis woman's whole existence. ( ) Coleridge
7. Variety's the very spice of life
   That gives it all its flavour. ( ) Cowper
8. Life is ever lord of Death
   And love can never lose its own. ( ) Fitzgerald
9. Constancy lives in realms above;
   And life is thorny, and youth is vain. ( ) Gay
10. Thus at the flaming forge of life
    Our fortunes must be wrought. ( ) Gilbert
11. Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
    Stains the white radiance of Eternity. ( ) Gray
12. But there's nothing half so sweet in life
    As love's young dream. ( ) Longfellow
13. Farewell, my own, Light of my life, farewell!
    For crime unknown I go to dungeon cell. ( ) Milton
14. Comes the blind Fury with the abhorred shears
    And slits the thin-spun life. ( ) Moore
15. Life! we've been long together
    Through pleasant and through cloudy weather. ( ) Pope
16. Then to the Lip of this poor earthern Urn
    I lean'd, the Secret of my Life to learn. ( ) Scott
17. For modes of faith let graceless zealots fight;
    His can't be wrong whose life is in the right. ( ) Shakespeare
18. Along the cool sequestered vale of life
    They kept the noiseless tenor of their way. ( ) Shelley
19. 'Tis the sunset of life gives me mystical lore,
    And coming events cast their shadows before. ( ) Tennyson
20. The best is yet to be,
    The last of life, for which the first was made. ( ) Whittier

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Fiction. *There is some good solid writing in the fiction reviewed below. All five books have a full-bodied story to tell, from "Red Plush," a Victorian family chronicle of Glasgow in the Seventies, to that long short story "The Pearl," drawn by John Steinbeck from a legendary tale of Mexican pearl fishers. Not one of these five is written in the experimental, self-conscious, and plotless manner which has been labeled by the London* Times *as "intellectually fashionable" and boring. "The Pearl" will appear before long in the movies with an all-Mexican cast. Marcia Davenport's New York novel and Howard Breslin's reasonably conventional historical novel of backwoods Vermont are both likely candidates for the screen. Incidentally, it is about time that picture producers passed the buck and took a look at novels from post-war China that are not in the "Good Earth" tradition. Preston Schoyer's "The Indefinite River," our critic says, combines war, terror, intrigue, love, and a true Oriental atmosphere.*

Victorian Three-Decker

RED PLUSH. By Guy McCrone. New York: Farrar, Straus & Co. 1947. 615 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

IT HAS been long since a novel in the full-bodied tradition of the Victorian three-decker has appeared in competition with the more feverish and explosive fiction of today, or with the artifically glamorous and bedizened historical romances that keep on climbing up the ladder of the best-seller lists. This six-hundred-page, leisurely chronicle of the rise of the Moorhouse family from an Ayrshire farmhouse to Glasgow mansions is as massively constructed as an old church. Though its characters are Scotch to the core it is inevitably reminiscent of the saga of the Forsytes, that series of novels that Galsworthy found it so difficult to bring to an end, in which nineteenth-century English family life is embalmed forever. But if "Red Plush" is written with something less than Galsworthy's fluid grace, it has its own solid virtues. As John Marquand has said, it is not a costume story or escapist literature. In his unpretentious manner Guy McCrone has been able to paint on his wide canvas all of the details of that comfortably overstuffed life of the 1860's and 1870's when the Industrial Revolution in Great Britain was extending its railroads, building its ugly factories, constructing its vast cities and crowding them with aggressive moneymakers and with millions of starving and wretched slaves of the machine who were condemned to live in the foulest slums in all Europe. Not that the Moorhouses bothered their heads to any extent with the ugly facts of life. They were too busy getting on in the world and too concerned with hiding the remnants of crude country manners and accents behind a thick veneer of conventions.

Brothers and sisters, they had been brought up on the frugal and hard life of a Scotch farm and had left it for the city. They had all of them married well, good solid marriages that brought money into the bank, that helped them establish businesses and build opulent houses. Their children came tumbling discreetly into the world to continue the process of creating more wealth and more families. It was a time when in spite of an occasional depression there were no doubts that there would ever be an end to material progress, or any apprehension of the revolutions and wars that were only over the horizon. It is satisfying today to read of these opulent and overdressed people so closely united by the bonds of family and common ambitions, so like each other and yet in many ways so different.

—From the book jacket.

There was Arthur Moorhouse, the head of the family, getting rich on selling cheese and always ready to take on extra burdens. There was Bel his wife, charming and the best dressed woman of the tribe, who could never see that there was anything strange in thinking that her children should marry for money. Mungo, another brother, had stayed on the farm toiling like a common laborer, but endowed with all the alleged rough virtues of country people. Surprisingly, Mungo, apparently a permanent bachelor, had caught the eye of the forty-year-old daughter of an old relic of the titled and landed gentry. His marriage increased the stock of the city Moorhouses, as did the union of the youngest brother with the sweet but uninspiring daughter of an immensely wealthy shipowner. While he was engaged, David was assaulted by the first emotional outbreak in his life; he fell wildly in love with a girl he had known on the farm who had become a famous singer, but prudence and the vision of wealth and responsibility stifled this momentary flame. Another Moorhouse sister had married a silent and bald alderman so that the family had connections with politics, as well as business and county aristocracy.

The only streak of wildness in the entire and compact group was discovered in little Phoebe, a half-sister, who was brought from the farm to Bel's house when the old man of the tribe was killed with his young Highland wife when his horse ran away with the carriage. Phoebe had a Celtic strain, the slanting eyes and the occasional rare beauty of the untamed mountain girl. The lowlanders of her family grew to love her but looked at her askance. Inevitably she produced the only tragedy any of them suffered during the course of this long chronicle. Phoebe married an equally unpredictable young man, an engineer, who had suffered the unspeakable ignominy of losing his job. He was offered a position as manager of a small factory in Vienna, and there he finally took his lovely Phoebe, whose seeming coldness and indifference to the world about her was suddenly swept away by a storm of passionate love and tenderness. The tragedy came about through Bel's insistence that Phoebe should have her baby at home in Scotland. None of the Moorhouses could believe that so frivolous and heathen a place as Vienna could possibly produce doctors able safely to deliver a child. On the long and stormy voyage to Glasgow she became seriously ill, and her baby was

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—From "The Pearl."

born dead in an Edinburgh hospital. Furthermore, she was told that she could not have another child. Her husband back in Vienna, suffering and lonely, succumbed one night to the childish charms of the lightheart-ed daughter of his landlady. Naturally, when his wife returned to him, his native honesty compelled him to confess. After that, they slept apart and would have separated if the Viennese girl had not presented a son to her one-night lover. When she died in a dramatic and horrible fire at the opera where she was singing in the chorus, Phoebe took the baby and her dejected husband to her heart.

In this long narrative the story flows along like the current of a wide river, carrying the reader with it through tranquil scenes in the Scotch countryside, past Highland glens, through teeming and bustling Glasgow and past luxuriant and opera-bouffe Vienna, the gay and beautiful capital of the Empire that old Franz Joseph had built out of so many elements. It is strange to find that the author is able to create a sparkling reality out of the half-Oriental splendor of Vienna, so alien to the ugly primness and crudity of Glasgow. He is equally at home in the charming dwelling of a Viennese aristocrat, a farmhouse in Ayrshire, or the mansion of a cheese merchant in Glasgow. His characters are four-square, believable, and there is enough quiet humor to enliven his chapters. The reader becomes absorbed in them, slowly drawn into the warmth of the atmosphere he has created. "Red Plush" is a book to dream over the long hours, for you cannot rush through it. It is a sedative that calms the mind and that lets you forget the ominous headlines of our own feverish and anxious decade.

THE AUTHOR: Guy McCrone is undiluted Scots and is to the heather bred, even if, September 13, 1898, he was born " by chance" in Birkenhead, Cheshire, England. "My mother's family," he says, "were good, talentless people." His father, a successful engineering chemist, provided his son with a carefree youth in Ayreshire and a good education at Cambridge, where, destined for business, he took "a distinctionless degree in economics." Semi-blinded by a childhood accident, he zealously scrubbed floors and sold cigarettes to English troops in a Normandy YMCA during World War I. A three months' interlude with the Indian YMCA in Paris allowed him a whirl of opera and theatre, but required so many dutiful convoys to the Folies Bergères he became permanently immunized against French music halls. He also took singing lessons, and after the war—advised that he had the voice and temperament for opera—finally succeeded in exhausting his father's objections to a music career. Unfortunately, the victory boomeranged, and he collapsed after two months' study. His love for melodic art has subsequently been nourished by marriage into a musical family sired by a famous engineer who revolutionized sanitary fitments. In 1935, he played Aeneas in the only English performance of Berlioz's "The Trojans," given at the Glasgow Theatre Royal. After reading his love letters Mrs. McCrone insisted that he write. Michael Sadleir tore his first novel, "The Striped Umbrella," to pieces. He rewrote the book, had it accepted. Later Mr. Sadleir encouraged him to complement "Antimacassar City" with the two books that now make up the triology "Wax Fruit"—here titled "Red Plush." He's written five novels, English dialogue for French and German plays, had two plays produced, and translated opera. "I grew up happily and have married happily," says Mr. McCrone. "If I wrote bitterly and sharply, I should be writing outside my range."

R. G.

Fable Retold

THE PEARL. By John Steinbeck. With drawings by José Clemente Orozco. New York: The Viking Press. 1947. 122 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by MAXWELL GEISMAR

THIS is an old Mexican folk tale which John Steinbeck has recast in his familiar paisano vein. It originally appeared in *The Woman's Home Companion* under the title of "The Pearl of the World" and now, with five full-page original drawings by Orozco, it forms a modest and attractive little volume. But it also raises some serious questions about almost all Steinbeck's recent books and his work as a whole.

The story deals with a Mexican fisherman named Kino who is devoted to his wife, Juana, and his child, Coyotito. The child is bitten by a scorpion and the white doctor refuses to treat it. Kino discovers a huge pearl, the greatest pearl in the world according to his Mexican neighbors. The doctor tries to steal it, the pearl merchants (also white) try to cheat him out of it, and Kino is forced, in what is apparently an inevitable sequence of tragic consequences, to flee from his village and to murder the "trackers" who come after him. In the end he has lost his home, his child, and his happiness, and he flings the pearl back into the sea.

"If this story is a parable," Steinbeck says, "perhaps everyone takes his own meaning from it and reads his own life into it," and indeed, as in most of Steinbeck's allegories, there are several meanings implicit in "The Pearl," not all of which, perhaps, are what the author consciously intended.

The writing is very good, as are the descriptions of village life and Mexican types, and the Gulf scene itself: the land, the climate, even the various hours of the day. There is less of Steinbeck's romantic whimsicality, too, although one still could do without quite so many of his Mexican "songs." And what one notices again is how much more interested Steinbeck really is in the natural scene, and in animal life, than in the people or the human emotions of his narratives.

It is not particularly important that the "whites" of his primitive tales are always complete villains. "As with all retold tales," Steinbeck also tells us, "there are only good and bad things and black and white things . . . and no in-between anywhere." But the quality that has marked Steinbeck's work as a whole is precisely the sense of black and white things, and good and bad things—that is to say, the

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sense of a fabulist or a propagandist rather than the insight of an artist. Moreover, we have now come to understand that even primitive souls are highly complicated—it is probably harder for a modern writer to understand them than to understand a man of his own time and place. The doctor of "The Pearl" speaks to all of Kino's race "as though they were simple animals." But the doctor's main fault is that he apparently considers all Mexican Indians bad, while Steinbeck considers all Mexican Indians good.

In the climax of this fable, too, it is interesting to notice that Steinbeck describes his native fisherman as "a terrible machine"—in Kino's moment of anger he becomes "as cold and deadly as steel." One has only to compare Steinbeck's primitive types with those of D. H. Lawrence, say, or his studies of peasant character with those of the Italian writer Silone, to realize his limits. Of all the ranking modern writers who have gone back to primitive material as a protest against and a solace for contemporary society, Steinbeck is, as a matter of fact, the least well-endowed; what he usually does is to ascribe a peculiar sort of suburban American romanticism to these native types. "Go with God," Juana says to her husband as he prepares to murder the trackers, but one wonders just which God Kino is supposed to go with.

The most important point in Steinbeck's earlier career was the change, around 1935, from such pagan excursions as "To a God Unknown" or "Tortilla Flat" to the novels of social criticism, "In Dubious Battle" and "The Grapes of Wrath." It is interesting to speculate on the reasons why Steinbeck has now returned to this earlier and less satisfactory vein of his work. And, without stressing the fact that our national history did not end with the Second World War, one would like to remind this gifted and volatile American novelist that his recent works do mark a sort of reversionary tendency in his career.

One might say that the artist, too, must discover and cherish his own pearl—he cannot reject it for a state of false innocence.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 712)

COMMAGER:
AMERICA IN PERSPECTIVE

All mankind was . . . interested in the American experiment. . . . What would be the consequences of political democracy, . . . social equality, . . . universal free education, . . . the intermixture of peoples and races, of new standards of material well-being?

—"The Rival Ragmen," by Peggy Bacon.

Looking-Glass World

EAST SIDE, WEST SIDE. By Marcia Davenport. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1947. 376 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by GEORGE DANGERFIELD

MARCIA DAVENPORT'S Jessie Bourne is a charming woman who cannot reconcile herself to the way in which she spends her time. Her acquaintances seem, with very few exceptions, to be dedicated to material success in its grossest or its vainest forms. Many are prominent in New York, some are famous, all are wealthy. To an outsider, the life of this shapeless and acquisitive society might seem enviable enough: to Jessie it is often an empty and often a graceless affair. Often, but not always. She has a sentimental yearning towards those unfashionable New Yorkers who live between "the elegances of the East River apartment houses and the old boundary of the rich and the privileged at Lexington Avenue": but no sooner has she indulged this emotion than she turns towards her "cool, delicately remote home, whose quiet and privacy and beauty mocked the very emotions that had brought her out . . . to wander through the hard world of her neighbors."

For Jessie Bourne is, unwillingly perhaps, of the very essence of the society which so disquiets her. As we follow her through a busy and rather violent week, in which she discards a husband, compounds a homicide, and finds a lover, we are apt to think of her less and less as a woman and more and more as a catalogue of possessions. Her house and its furniture, her cook, her waitress, her maid, her cat, her clothes, her habits—all are of the very finest quality. "Of themselves," she thinks, "these habits were all perfectly graceful, perfectly legitimate; people who existed oblivious of them were unpleasant and unattractive to know." She is, indeed, a luxurious object, and one finds it hard to resist the conclusion that if one took these material luxuries away there would be very little of her left. At the beginning of the novel, Marcia Davenport seems to have intended us to reach precisely this conclusion; but as she develops her story she neglects to offer us those clues which such an ironical purpose should provide if it is to make itself known. To sympathize with Jessie Bourne is one thing—hers is a most intelligible dilemma: to admire her, as Marcia Davenport seems unaffectedly to admire her, is quite another. If there was an ironical purpose, it was soon discarded; and from this one might fairly argue that the creature's dilemma is shared by the creator.

Jessie, indeed, is an example of that condition of *odi et amo* which might well be visited upon a sensitive woman who chooses to live in what Virginia Woolf once called "a looking-glass world," a world in which "the prizes are all reflections." Jessie Bourne despises the looking-glass; she loves the reflections. At a party which she finds intolerable she is able to tell herself that she and her companion make "a pleasant and decorative sight, just the sort of attractive and amusing accessory to such a party that hostesses hope to assemble." Her thoughts are a perpetual battleground between complacency and compunction. When she enters a famous restaurant, and is conducted upstairs by the proprietor, she is obliged to remind herself that "no matter how

(*Continued on page* 40)

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Personal History. *W. E. Woodward now adds a book of his own to the growing list of autobiographies—Henry Canby's "American Memoir," Burton Rascoe's "We Were Interrupted," George Middleton's "These Things Are Mine"—which have been filling in useful background on fifty years of American intellectual life. . . . We have long been fascinated by the split personality of Ruth McKenney. Strongly enough, she has been both an editor of* New Masses *and a* New Yorker *writer. Whimsical sketches from the latter magazine made up her smash hit as book and play, "My Sister Eileen." Yet she insists, "I only wrote the funny stories to make a living. . . . I have very little sense of humor, and suffer a good deal while writing what is supposed to be funny. I have published one book which I like, called 'Industrial Valley'."*

No Self-Debunker

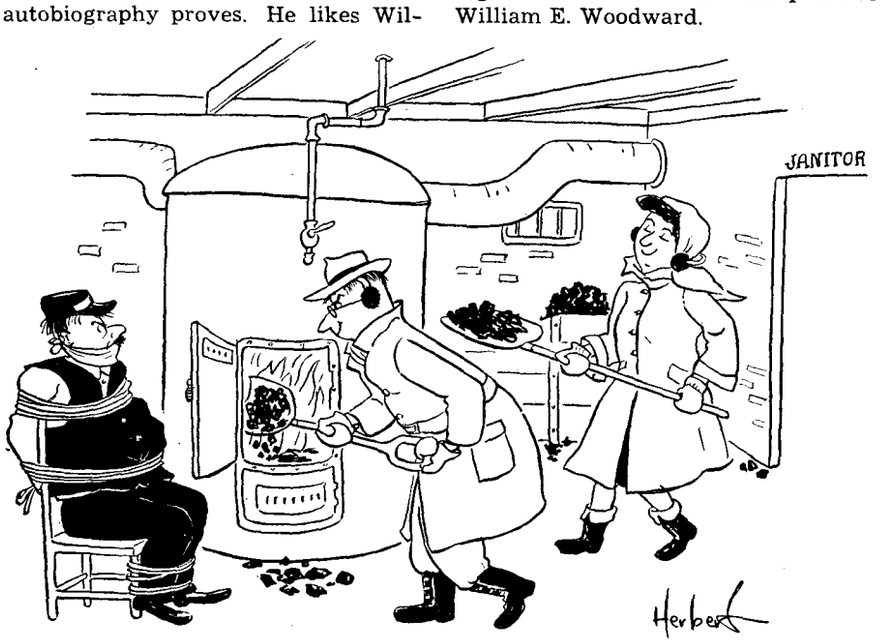
THE GIFT OF LIFE. By W. E. Woodward. New York: E. P. Dutton & Co. 1947. 422 *pp.* $4.75.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

IT IS difficult to conceive of any other country but this in which a man could have had as many and successful careers as William Woodward. He has been a first-rate copy reader, an editor of subscription books, a newspaperman, the owner of a syndicate, a successful banker, and finally novelist, biographer, and historian. Now in his early seventies, he has written his autobiography with the obvious enjoyment with which a man might be expected to look back on a career that emerged from a youth in a factory-owned cottage in a Southern mill town. "The Gift of Life" is in many ways a typical American success story. Without any outstanding talent to begin with young Woodward pulled himself up by his bootstraps. He would have been successful in any profession or enterprise which interested him long enough, or which gave opportunities to an alert mind and industrious habits. The kind of luck which seems to have boosted many a man upstairs into the front parlor is almost entirely lacking from his story, except the good fortune to meet and have the sense to marry a wife who was clever, intelligent, and helpful to him through the long years. In fact, he missed seizing luck by the forelock several times, by leaving a job when he should have stayed or by becoming bored at the wrong time. Once, for example, he was offered a job to write advertising copy for the young Coca Cola Company, then established in a dismal house in Atlanta, where the dark pacifier was mixed and stirred by hand. His salary was to be part stock and part cash, and Woodward turned it down and with it, doubtless, the chance to be a millionaire. Later, he attracted the attention of and was hired by Hearst, Coleman Dupont, the founder of the Morris Plan Banks, and other imposing men, who in every case were looking for a young man of his proved qualities and capabilities. He was hired because he was making good, and he succeeded because he had the qualities that create success and the instinctive flair for saying the right thing at the right time.

There was a sharp and sardonic streak underlying his apparent good nature that led him to his novel, "Bunk," in 1923. He brought the word debunk into common use. Mr. Woodward claims to have suffered from it ever since, for he has been accused, with some justice, of debunking George Washington, Thomas Paine, and the country itself. But concerning the hero of his latest book he is decidedly eupeptic, as the title of this autobiography proves. He likes William Woodward and is intelligently proud of him. He likes being alive and living in the memories he holds. "I love everything about life," he writes in his preface, "about the people I meet and to whom I listen. . . . I like nice fresh clothes, and the glow of sunshine, and the purr of automobiles, and the lovely girls with the bright eyes and delicate perfume."

Even his misfortunes, which were rare enough, seem pleasant adventures into error as he contemplates them. He has the kind of philosophy of life you might expect such a man to gather about him. He believes in neither heaven nor hell, but he is sure of the endurance of the soul of man, that death is a gateway to another life, and that the soul may inhabit many bodies. There is nothing new in so well ordered a scheme for eternity, and it is a comfortable credo for any man to hold in his later life. "Excelsior! Onward and Upward!" might be his motto, and there should be on his shield the stalwart figure of a man looking comfortably upward into space. There are two sides to his nature, he feels: he is both extrovert and introvert but rarely at the same time. It is perhaps the introvert, irritated now and then at being wrapped in the warm and comfortable mantle of the extrovert, that led him to write "Bunk" and later to debunk, in spite of what he may say to the contrary, the Father of Our Country, who seems to be almost as unknowable as he claims God himself to be. In the minds of a great many readers of "George Washington, the Image and the Man," he has left the impression of a dull man with wooden teeth, always favored by luck, and grimly determined to be successful in whatever he attempted. He is now on record as having a more comfortable conception of William E. Woodward.



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Peppery Grandsire

THE LOUD RED PATRICK. By Ruth McKenney. New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co. 1947. 161 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by PAMELA TAYLOR

THE McKenny tendency to become involved in hilarious adventures, first recounted in "My Sister Eileen," appears to have been inherited directly from Grandfather Flannigan, to whom this book is a warm and loving tribute.

He was an Irish immigrant; not the sentimental, slightly alcoholic one who is a familiar figure of fun in this country; he loathed all our shoddy, fake-Irish clichés — the clay pipes, the souvenir shamrocks—and he also loathed Tammany Hall, politicians, Irish comedians, policemen, undertakers, and pretentiousness. He was an Irish patriot, and always ready to say so.

"The Loud Red Patrick" (so called to distinguish him from the other six Flannigan sons, all of whom had been christened Patrick, at the insistence of their father, in one mass ceremony) is certainly the most uninhibited of the colorful ancestors who have been chronicled recently in such numbers. Indeed colorful seems a rather pallid adjective to apply to him. He was one of those people about whom it is fascinating and side-splittingly funny to read, but who was unquestionably an excruciating father to have. When one considers how hideously embarrassing most children find even humdrum parents, it is almost impossible to imagine what a father like "The Loud Red Patrick" must have meant to his six pretty daughters. His granddaughter admits that he was a "staggering handicap" to their efforts to get themselves married off.

Married they finally were however; some of the timorous suitors fell by the wayside, but the more hardy ones persevered, for the Flannigan girls were very pretty. One of these courageous ones was Ruth McKenney's father, who survived being involved in some of Grandfather's more spectacular exploits. From the safe distance of the second generation, Ruth McKenney and her sister Eileen, who on occasion went back to live at the Flannigan house, observed their grandfather with fascinated attention. A man with a strong sense of theatre, he provided drama, had the most wonderful stories, and being great-hearted as well as full of charm, was beloved by his granddaughters as well, indeed, as by most of the people with whom he came in contact.

To enumerate and thus hint at the various episodes included in "The Loud Red Patrick" would be to spoil a great deal of its fun, for one of Grandfather Flannigan's distinguishing characteristics was his unexpectedness. In a world sparsely furnished with laughter, like ours today, you really can't afford to miss him.

—*Eric Schall.*

"Ruth McKenney's tendency to become involved in hilarious adventures appears to have been inherited."

VIP in CPI

REBEL AT LARGE: Recollections of Fifty Crowded Years. By George Creel. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 1947. 384 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by JOHN T. WINTERICH

THIS is the autobiography of a man who reached the pinnacle of his career in the Forgotten War—the one which ended on November 11, 1918, with what was called, in unconscious but accurate prophecy, the Armistice. No one has fewer illusions about that forgottenness than Mr. Creel himself. Early in 1942 he went to Washington to offer his services to his government.

> I trudged from office to office, patiently recalling the part I had played in World War I. The young men to whom I talked, many of them looking as if they had just come from commencement exercises, were very courteous, but seemed to have difficulty in differentiating between the 1917 conflict and the Punic Wars.

Mr. Creel's choice of analogy for his legitimate hyperbole is not altogether happy—there were three Punic Wars.

For the benefit of young men and young women who may never have heard of George Creel (or of General Peyton C. March, or Colonel Edward M. House, or Newton D. Baker, or Robert Lansing, or Emperor Franz Josef, or Alexander Kerensky, or Venustiano Carranza) it is necessary to explain that Mr. Creel, during the Forgotton War, served as chairman of the Committee on Public Information. The other members of the committee were the Secretaries of State, War, and the Navy, and as they were reasonably busy about their own concerns, Mr. Creel had a pretty free hand. The CPI embraced activities which, in the Second World War, were divided among the Office of War Information (itself the legatee of the Office of Government Reports, the Office of the Coördinator of Information, and the Office of Facts and Figures), the Office of International Information and Cultural Affairs (with accretions from the Office of Strategic Services), and the Office of Censorship. Mr. Creel's summary of the work of the CPI—in fact, most of his First World War story—is good primary source material. He defends, with competence, Secretary Josephus Daniels's abolition of the officers' wine-mess in the Navy; he comments cogently on Senator Henry Cabot Lodge and Colonel Theodore Roosevelt. Lodge, he aptly says, "was lifted from mediocrity to evil power, and enabled to translate his personal hatreds into national policies." Discussing the pernicious National Security League and American Defense Society, he uses words of searching and profound accuracy:

> They worked, of course, in fertile ground, for there is a simplicity about hate that makes it attractive to a certain type of mind. It makes no demand on the mental processes, it does not require reading, estimate, or analysis, and by reason of its removal of doubt gives an effect of decision, a sense of well-being.

His claim to being the "original Woodrow Wilson man" is documentable: "As early as 1905 I boomed him in *The Independent* [of Kansas City] for the Presidency."

Kansas City, Denver, Washington, Paris loom large in these memoirs (there is not enough about New York). Here are Judge Ben Lindsey, the Pendergasts, Tammen and Bonfils, Harding, Coolidge, F.D.R., Truman. Creel's account of Truman's political background is searching and detailed. They were born and reared in the same Missouri county; to each, Kansas City was his first big town.

Mr. Creel was eye-witness to much of the vast excitement of the first half of the twentieth century—an era that took America, in spite of herself, out into the world. Historians of that era (no one will envy them their job) will regard him as a competent reporter who has written a useful book.

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The Next Step

IRWIN EDMAN

"I AM ASKING the Mayor," said Paul, "to appoint a committee on Un-New Yorkish activities." Paul is a perfect watch-dog of the public good.

"Un-New Yorkish?" I said. "*Un-American* is vague enough, but Un-New Yorkish—what on earth is that?"

"That's the trouble," said Paul, "people see this sort of thing going on right under their noses and they haven't the slightest idea. I've met subversive anti-New Yorkers in your own apartment and you've been utterly blind. Even introduced me to some of them as kindred spirits. Of course, most people guilty of Un-New Yorkish activities were born elsewhere, or are the sons of people born elsewhere, but sometimes the worst traitors are bona fide native New Yorkers who have been corrupted. There has been a growing subtle propaganda against our established and traditional New York way of life. It's got into books, into the movies, into the newspapers. It's high time there was an inquiry! The subversive elements ought to be removed from our colleges, our schools, the city services. There are even said to be guards on the subways, mind you, who do all they can to persuade passengers that life in New York is not worth living, and to make things as uncomfortable as possible for those who seem to be happy going to their work. It's later than you think. An inquiry must be started at once."

"With subpoenas and all," I said.

"Oh, yes, the whole hog," he said; "millionaires and movie stars and press agents and all. This thing is serious."

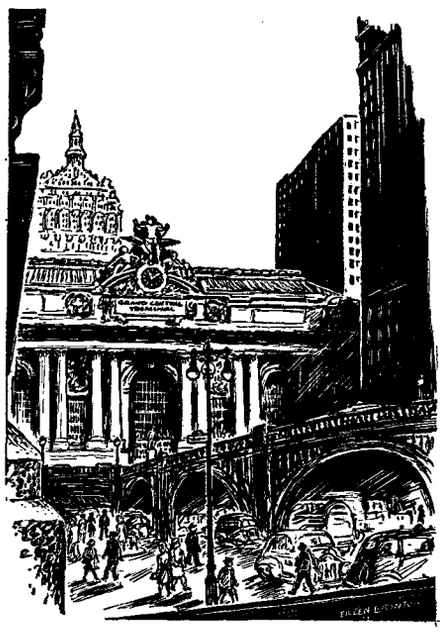
"Can you give me an example or two?" I asked. "I have a feeling you're being a little hysterical."

"Oh, am I!" Paul replied bitterly. "That's the trouble with you liberals. You're always tolerant until it's too late. The whole of our time-honored customs and ways of life will be eaten into long before you and the other respectable elements in this town are aware of it. Take the movies. There is that famous film, 'The Lost Weekend' representing a drunk right on the streets of New York. There's 'The Kiss of Death' in which New York is made the setting for a lot of killers and stool pigeons and gangsters. It's become standard practice lately to place every tough-guy picture on location in New York. And things have got worse than that. Have you seen 'Miracle on Thirty-Fourth Street'? Remember the old gentleman, obviously a New Yorker, who is shown as being a silly old sentimentalist who believes he is Santa Claus? And before the film is over, practically all New York children, and adults, too, believe in him. And in that picture did you notice the subtle attack on Macy's, one of the foundations of our New York life? There's a dirty crack or two at Gimbel's, too. Next thing you know there will be assaults on the automats, and the subways. Think of what people in Kansas will think of us!

"Those things are obvious enough," Paul continued. "Even you must have noticed them. But there are less obvious evidences. I wonder if you have noticed how often you see suggestions in magazines and on the radio and in books that life is not worth living in New York, sly questionings of the basic verities of existence in our town."

"As for instance?" I said, still dubious.

"Well, there are the novels that tell of people in the very prime of life, even people with a cooperative apartment of their own and in the east Seventies, giving up everything and going off to the Maine woods or to Southern California, or even to some small town in upper New York State where perhaps they had grown up. The writer always quietly intimates that the move, *any* such move, is an improvement, and that life anywhere, in Ogdensburg, say, or Watertown is better than life in New York City."



"But," I interrupted, "there are lots and lots of novels about the excitement and glamor of life in New York. I wouldn't take too seriously these few escape books that talk about getting away from it all."

"Oh, I wouldn't," said Paul, "if there weren't a good many other symptoms, too. For instance, even people paid to celebrate the so-called advantages of New York are, for reasons of their own, calling into question these very advantages. Everyone knows that New York is the center of the theatre world, and the theatre is one of the great civic arts, has been from the Greeks down. Pericles boasted of the entertainments of Athens as one of the great achievements of civilization, among the things for whose preservation it was proper to die. Is *that* the way our dramatic critics are writing these days? Just look what they are saying about *most* of the plays that are produced, some of them costing thousands of dollars and employing hundreds of local people. It makes no difference to these 'critics.' They would as leave have all the theatres dark, or have none at all. They secretly would like to see New York without any theatres, as in the towns where they were born. Inwardly they hate New York and all its ways, including the theatre. They are gradually persuading even born New Yorkers that it's no longer necessary to see a play the first night or the first week, or at all. Besides, in other columns of the paper you will see skeptical pieces about night clubs, and I saw only recently in two well-known magazines attacks on both the typical New York cocktail party and the dinner party as well."

"Well, that's going pretty far, I must say," I said, turning pale. "After all, without the cocktail party and the dinner party the very basis of New York life would be destroyed."

Paul looked happier at this first sign of my being impressed. "Oh, but they go further than that," he said. "There are whisperings going on that New York is not a good place in which to bring up children, that there is not enough space for them to play, and that there are not enough or good enough schools for them to go to. And I've seen suggestions that New York is not a good place for young men to come to for a career either. One evening newspaper well known for its powerful crusades is about to revive Horace Greeley's advice to young men to go West. It's going to give prizes to young men who *do* go West."

"What's the idea of all this sniping?"

(*Continued on page* 29)

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Art. *It is a commonplace to say that we are in a period of reaction. Defined by the dictionary, reaction means "a tendency to return to a former state of things," an understandable tendency which may nevertheless lead easily into extremes. And it is by no means confined to excessive red-baiting. We are in a period of reaction now in the art world. Last year, for instance, the State Department's traveling exhibition of modern art was doomed by a hostile Congress, although it had been asked for by many European countries.*

Secrets in the Fur-Lined Museum

MONA LISA'S MUSTACHE: A Dissection of Modern Art. By T. H. Robsjohn-Gibbings. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1947. 265 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by RICHARD MCLAUGHLIN

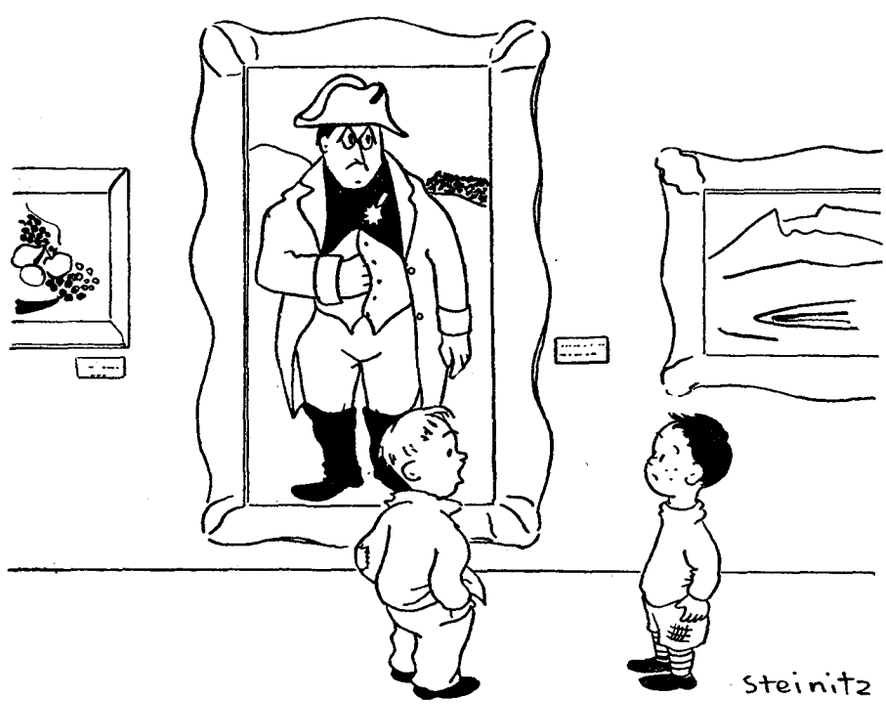
T. H. ROBSJOHN-GIBBINGS would have us believe that there is too much secrecy going on over at the "Fur-Lined Museum," christened by art critic Emily Genauer, on West Fifty-third St. Not only that, but he feels that modern artists have developed over the years an unhealthy preoccupation with magic and the mysteries of the occult. More than a little piqued because he cannot understand what some of these modern painters are driving at, Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings rashly concludes that modern art is "completely disconnected from the main stream of twentieth-century creative thought." Hasn't he heard that this is the age of psychoanalysis? No, it seems our confused author is firmly convinced that "attic-explorers" of tomorrow will look upon the art we treasure today as "an attempt to reverse scientific progress and rational thought."

Viewing the overall history of modern art as a conspiracy brewed in a witches' cauldron, and modern artists as charlatans, witch doctors, and Hitlers, Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings reveals that this time he has taken on too big an assignment. He was more or less at home writing about antiques in "Goodbye, Mr. Chippendale." Not only could he afford to be flippant, but his knowledge and experience as a successful interior decorator served him to good purpose. He was not unprepared in case any real antique lovers or collectors called him to task. The situation is the reverse now. Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings displays neither a deep nor a fine appreciation of painting; not, anyway, in the sense Leo Stein spoke of appreciation. And lifting passages, with an eye for the sensational and the provocative, from the works of artists, their critics, and devotees, is all right if he does not particularly wish to be taken seriously. But was there ever a more serious pamphleteer against the "higher-browed" rackets than Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings?

Exploring the occult, the shady influences of Madame Blavatsky, the "secret brotherhoods" which began with Dante Gabriel Rossetti, called "the Svengali of the Pre-Raphaelites" by our somewhat hysterical author; attacking the different schools of painting, cubism, surrealism, futurism, their exponents, Gauguin, Picasso, Klee, Chirico, Kandinsky, Marinetti, Dali, etc., Robsjohn-Gibbings leaves no doubt in our minds that modern canvases are his pet horror. That he should not keep this phobia to himself but choose to share it with the reading public is certainly no cause for rejoicing. There is an unbecoming coyness in such writing that refers to Rossetti as "a bearded lady of Shalott working feverishly night and day at his loom," or which suggests that Gertrude Stein's experiments in prose were nothing but literary stammerings "which have reached their ultimate conclusion in bobby-soxers lustily singing 'Mairsie Doats,' and Danny Kaye giving out with 'Git Gat Gittle'." It occurs to us that while Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings was busy labeling modern artists as magicians and conjurers, he has at the same time not pulled off a bad job of conjuring himself.

Then, too, there is the question of Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings's source material. For fear, perhaps, of coming upon evidence which might conflict with his own preconceived theories, for example, on the Pre-Raphaelites being a cult of power-seekers, he turns to William Gaunt's "The Pre-Raphaelite Tragedy" instead of, say, to "Poor Splendid Wings" by Francis Winwar. Although Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings would have us remember them for their scheme to establish a medieval heaven on earth, or trying to set up a dictatorship by the elite of the artists, many of us can overlook the esthetic posturings of the Pre-Raphaelites and recognize them as the only rebels outside of the surrealists to go openly, defiantly against the current of their times, opposing the industrial system and mechanized living all the way.

It may, or it may not, have dawned on Mr. Robsjohn-Gibbings, so bent on proving to us that present-day art is nothing short of necromancy, that the word "magic" appears at least three or four times on nearly every page in his book. Who is trying to mesmerize whom?



"He hadta . . . they didn't have DDT in those days."

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The Saturday Review of Literature

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Published by The Saturday Review Associates, Inc., 25 West 45th Street, New York 19, N. Y., Harrison Smith, President; J. R. Cominsky, Executive Vice President and Treasurer; Amy Loveman, Secretary

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Out of the Doldrums

UNWILLING to wait for the laurels of its hundredth birthday, and following the editorial dictum of Ellery Sedgwick, "Don't wait for eternity; print it now!," *The Atlantic Monthly* has this month brought out its 90th Anniversary issue. In November 1857, a genteel little publication with 128 pages of fine print came out of Boston. There you could find James Russell Lowell, its editor; Harriet Beecher Stowe; John Lothrop Motley; the god-like Longfellow; Emerson, with four poems; Oliver Wendell Holmes, with "The Autocrat of the Breakfast Table"; all of them celebrated and representing with others the apex, the flowering of New England literature. To read it you would think that serene and lofty thought, cultured and philosophical minds, poetry and literature were to lead civilization to the gently socialist utopias of which men were dreaming.

There was no evidence there that the Civil War was around the corner, that depressions, revolutions, and two world wars lay in the womb of time. There was no evidence of the crudity and passionate vitality of American life, flooding westward, filling the world with a new kind of clamor; no evidence that ninety years later *The Atlantic* would publish an article on the atomic bomb by a new kind of physicist, Einstein, gravely apprehensive of a third world war, or that George Bernard Shaw, a year-old baby when the magazine was launched, would discuss an aspect of the kind of socialism that now rules an England shorn of its Oriental colonies. However great were its founders and its early contributors, they were walled off from the rushing tides of mankind, the fevers of money-making, the lusts for power, the cruder passions. Their own passions were intellectual; they were concerned with justice and truth, freedom and culture, in an exalted and limited sense.

Even the publishers who brought out *The Atlantic* and paid Lowell fifty dollars a week for editing it were not aware that the enterprise was entering a fiercely competitive business. *Harper's Magazine* had started seven years before and by serializing three of Dickens's novels and a life of Napoleon had reached the startling circulation of 150,000. *Scribner's* and *The Century* followed during the next twenty years. *The Atlantic,* which had stuck to New England writers and readers, languished and in the Nineties its circulation was at the vanishing point, while its three rivals, publishing the best of English and American literature, illustrated by the masters of steel engraving and copper plate, dominated the field that placed luxurious monthly magazines on the living-room tables of those who could afford them. Readers who are lucky enough to find the bound volumes of these three magazines of fifty years ago stacked in their attics will be astounded, if they do not know them, by the wealth of the material published, the elegance of type and make-up, and the startling quality of the artists and engravers who illustrated them. They were doomed, though they did not know it, with those that followed, *Forum* and *Dial* and many another that attempted to exist in an atmosphere of refinement and high thinking.

Only two have survived the arrival of the mass circulation monthlies and weeklies, *The Atlantic* and *Harper's,* and both of these narrowly escaped extinction in the first decade of this century. But through these magazines, now streamlined and facing the world squarely, a lesson has been taught that should be fruitful for the future. There should be, there must be, room for the independent magazine, that cannot hope, and does not want, to reach into the millions for a million subscribers. There never was a time when it was more vital to keep the flame of literature burning and to present the soundest thought on the problems of today, and the future, for the hundreds and thousands who do not necessarily wish ideas stuffed into capsules, or to have them watered down by the easy and slick language of staff writers, highly trained to know the latest taboos of advertisers and editorial policy, skilled in discovering what panaceas and soporifics the public wants, to know what weekly and monthly dubious miracles in medicine and science to announce, what fears and dangers it would be good business to feed the public.

Failing to find that freedom from taboos and repressions from any source in its popular magazines, the public turns to books, for reprints of old books and for the slowly produced new ones. Time has been accelerated in our day so that a catastrophe or an historical event that should have been years brewing in the cauldron may come upon us between one day and the next. Life now is a motion picture projected at full speed. Therein lie the want and the necessity for weekly and monthly magazines so that the information that we need may reach us interpreted through seasoned minds as soon as is possible. Between the conception of a factual book and its final publication a year or two years may elapse. It is too long a time to wait while the fire burns below the explosive. The largest magazines—with the exception of the newsweeklies *Time* and *Newsweek,* which are miraculously up to date—take three or four months between the writing of an article and its appearance on the stands. People wait for the book and they buy the best they can find. Consider the obvious fact displayed in the lists of best sellers, that the twelve or sixteen titles of fiction registered are for the great part historical romances or books of popular appeal and momentary interests, books of negligible literary value. The non-fiction list of the moment, for example, may list Gunther's "Inside U.S.A." first, Byrnes's "Speaking Frankly" second, and Liebling's "Peace of Mind" third In the same list will be de Nouy's "Human Destiny," Toynbee's "A Study of History," Shirer's "End of a Berlin Diary," and only one of these books has been found worthy of serializing in the popular magazines.

It is obvious that if the free and liberal magazine did not exist it would have to be invented. *The Atlantic*'s anniversary issue points the way. Neither that magazine nor *Harper's,* nor another that may be later ventured, may ever reach beyond half a million subscribers, though two of the book clubs have reached a million and more. Nevertheless the reading public has been greatly extended by the war and the immediate years that prefaced it, so that it can be proved that the subscribers are there. Perhaps without loss of quality or prestige an editor may be discovered with the genius to find the way, as DeWitt Wallace turned the hackneyed idea of a reprint magazine into *The Reader's Digest* with its ten million subscribers, as Henry Luce invented the successful news weekly *Time,* and as Ellery Sedgwick pulled *The Atlantic* out of the doldrums almost forty years ago.

H. S.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

"Your Newspaper"

SIR: In the article called "Newspapers and the Bomb" in *SRL* Oct. 4, there was a statement about the United Press which requires correction.

The article, based on a chapter from a forthcoming book by nine Nieman Fellows called "Your Newspaper," said that "the United Press . . . does not hesitate to put out a story announcing watermelon seeds as a 'cure' for pernicious anemia."

This statement is not in the published book. The reason is that during checking, while the work was in progress, the statement was found to be erroneous. It was promptly deleted on the galley proofs, but *SRL*, due to an unfortunate lapse in communications, used the uncorrected proofs for the text of the article.

I am sorry that this statement inadvertently got into print; it is unjust to the UP. The UP informs me that it did indeed have a watermelon seeds story last year, but the disease was nephritis, and watermelon seeds were reported to have been used by a doctor not as a "cure" but as a treatment. We had received a wrong steer and garbled version of the story, as we discovered ourselves when we checked back.

LEON SVIRSKY.

New York, N. Y.

SIR: I am no apologist for the American press. I believe too many newspapers are backward. But, as a working newspaperman, I find myself wincing at the tone employed by the Nieman Fellows.

I have no quarrel with their "ideal" newspaper. Their professional standards are intelligent and realistic.

It has become a rather widespread habit to treat newspapers as fortresses of reaction devoid of any desire for progress and with little feeling for their readers. To have the Nieman Fellows lending themselves to that through indirection is disheartening.

There is the curious statement, for example, that one "reason why publishers stick to the large-size page is that it makes possible bigger ads and hence (they believe) brings in more money."

A little research of the kind the Fellows advocate would have come in handy. They would have learned that newspaper presses aren't flexible. Publishers can't pick up their telephones and order a page "intermediate in size between the present full-size paper and a tabloid." The Fellows would seem to have been guilty of cub-like innocence. Press plates are not made of rubber and publishers can't tinker with giant pieces of machinery which cost $35,000 for a single unit. (I might add that the kind of paper the Fellows describe would take about thirty-two units.)

I'm not concerned about the page-size. Starting with new machinery, what they suggest is quite practicable. My quarrel is with their readiness to attribute only a desire for profit to publishers. It's an attitude not becoming to scholars.

Again, while they don't say it directly, they convey the impression that newspapers generally have failed to improve on type faces; have failed to curb the practice of continuing stories on inside pages; have been delinquent in indexing properly; and have not come up to a proper ideal of public service.

On this last item, I'm amused. The Fellows have come perilously close to nibbling on the hand that fed them. Mr. Nieman's monument, *The Milwaukee Journal*, is a prime example of a reader-service newspaper. The *Journal* is Milwaukee's public-information center. Its lobby contains a post office and a travel bureau. It fills out income tax returns for its readers, to name only one of its functions. The *Cleveland Press* goes even further, perhaps. The *Oregon Journal* and *The Indianapolis News* are only two other examples which come readily to mind. And the Fellows aren't going to like this, but the *Chicago Tribune* has done a tremendous job in this respect.

The Fellows call experimentation a "crying need." But what they didn't say is that in few fields is there as much experimentation.

Page one digests? They've been going on for years and the experimentation continues. Photos? Newspapers now develop a fidelity of reproduction believed impossible only a few years ago. Continuing stories? Newspapers have been tending toward ending the iniquitous practice for years.

Let me cite the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat*, which went the Fellows one better a long time ago. It carries *nothing* over from page one. If a story is too long, only the essential details are carried on page one and the rest becomes a separate, auxiliary story with the reader merely referred inside.

What the Nieman Fellows have done is to have taken the best in current American journalism and packaged it together as their ideal newspaper. With that few can disagree. My point is that they really haven't gone very far.

By their standards, our own *St. Louis Star-Times* might claim to be approaching the ideal. We run a daily news digest-index on page one (and an intelligent one); we try to make both reporting and headlines readable and responsible; we departmentalize our news on "national," "international" and local pages; we take pains with photographic display. We define departmental affairs properly. Our reporters specialize — and are pressed to do constant research. And purely as an aside, our editorial workers are the top pay group in the plant.

But while we'd like to think so, I doubt that we're much ahead, if any, in the profession. I know of no business where it is so necessary to study constantly to keep up. It is a business which *shows* constant improvement.

Certainly, we've got to get better all the time. My only criticism is that I don't like to see a talented group like the Nieman Fellows falling into the benighted error of looking on ours as a stagnant profession. It has its faults—but that's not one of them.

NORMAN E. ISSACS,
Managing Editor,
The St. Louis Star-Times.

St. Louis, Mo.

SIR: Just to keep the record straight:

In the article, "Newspapers and the Bomb" by nine Nieman Fellows, it is stated that one night in May 1940 William L. Laurence, of *The New York Times*, turned in a seven-column story on the release of atomic energy and at the rival *New York Her-*

THROUGH HISTORY WITH J. WESLEY SMITH

"However, your Majesty, don't think we cake-bakers don't appreciate your testimonial."

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ald Tribune the science reporter, John J. O'Neill, had less luck; his editors rejected the story.

This is hardly an adequate statement of the facts.

The correct story is: Early in February 1940, I secured an exclusive story on the release of atomic energy from Uranium 235. I turned in a five-and-a-half-column story. In those days readers had not heard about Uranium 235 and Uranium 238, fissioning of atoms, and slow neutrons. My story was considered too long and too technical and was not published. I rewrote the story as a magazine article and took it to the editors of *Harper's* magazine, who had asked me for an article on the subject several months earlier. *Harper's* published the article as the lead feature in the May 1940 issue.

Mr. Laurence published his story in *The New York Times* on the day following that in which *Harper's* appeared on the newsstands. I obtained my story three months before Mr. Laurence published his.

The Nieman Fellows will, I am sure, appreciate the difference between the record as published and the facts as here presented.

JOHN J. O'NEILL,
Science Editor,
New York Herald Tribune.

New York, N. Y.

Reclaiming Wayward Youth

SIR: The pleading letter of Mr. James O. Monroe [Sept. 20] compels my interest and demands a reply. Undoubtedly there is a need for helping and reclaiming wayward youth through the media of literature. Back in 1941 the late Mayor F. H. La Guardia appointed a committee of experts to prepare a list of suitable books for children in the courts. This invaluable booklet contained a list of 382 varied fiction and non-fiction books, covering the interests of boys and girls six to eighteen years of age. It indicates the reading level of each book —according to school-grade equivalents—from the first to the twelfth year. Copies are available from the Municipal Reference Library of New York City.

HERMAN K. SPECTOR,
Senior Librarian,
California State Prison.

San Quentin, Calif.

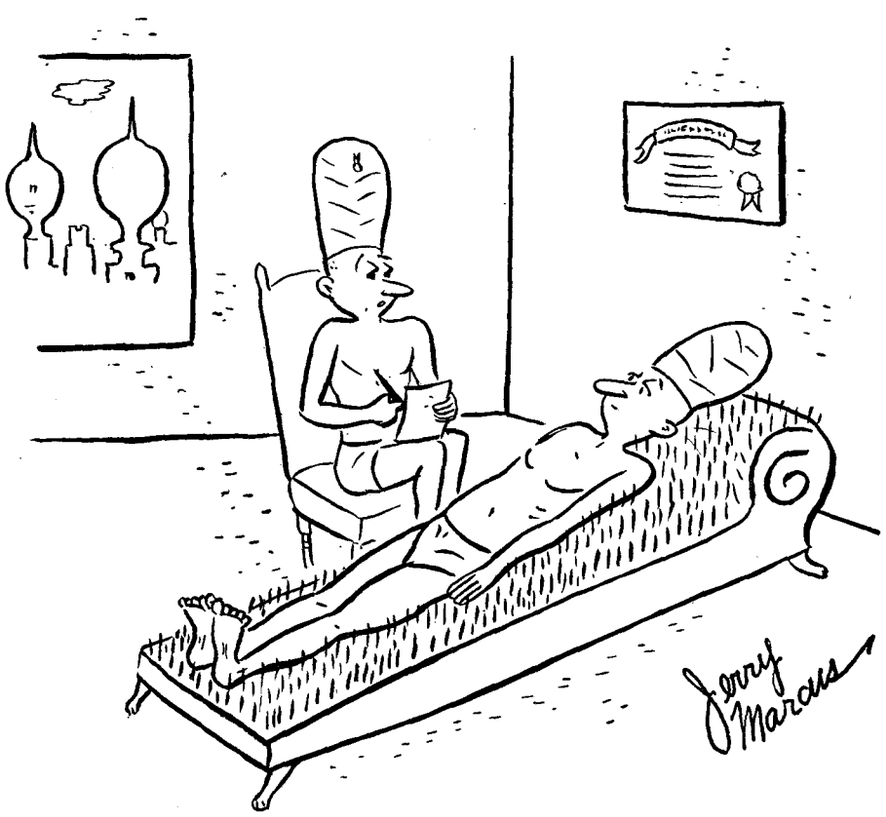
SIR: In a law practice that too often is money-grubbing and seamy, it is gratifying to receive so warm-hearted and enthusiastic a response to a simple favor as has been the response to my letter of September 20, in regard to "Books for Delinquent Youth." I feel I owe some acknowledgment to the many *Saturday Review* readers who have sent helpful and encouraging letters recommending books for my impecunious "client" now in the county jail, and to the others who have sent unsolicited books.

There have been several interesting developments in the matter. When I showed the state's attorney at lunch an armful of books from a local library, he asked to borrow one of them himself, to read before I took the lot of them in to the boy! A Methodist women's club is making a collection of books to start a library at the jail, and will turn them over, if you please, to the sheriff's wife, who is some kind of local library official herself. A lady in Florida has volunteered to correspond with the boy. One publishing company sent gratis two books that had not yet been released for publication.

The effect on the boy has been fine. He writes me currently asking for copies of "Tobacco Road," "Hitler's Doctor," and "Gene-Val-Gene" (*sic*). and adds, "This is sometimes called 'Les Miserables'." I don't know where he got such tastes, but they certainly indicate at least a modicum of literary maturity. He also wants to see all the letters that have been written about him. If the response does no more than show him that he is not utterly friendless, and help him to keep his nose clean while confined, I will be satisfied.

JAMES O. MONROE.

Collinsville, Ill.



Overtones of Disaster

SIR: Mr. Cerf's forceful article on the New York City school system [*SRL* Oct. 25] deserves wide attention. I find in it overtones of disaster comparable to those in your famous atomic age article, although of a different sort. Mr. Cerf's entry into the educational fight is a little late, but it is good to see him using his talents there, and his counterattack is needed now that the gains of a year ago are dwindling.

PAUL H. BEIK.

Swarthmore College,
Swarthmore, Pa.

Francois Villon's Contemporary

SIR: On page 9 of *SRL* Sept. 13 you refer "The Moneyman," by Costain, to twelfth-century France. I wonder, would you say "Kingsblood Royal" belongs to seventeenth-century America, and, if not, why not? Even in the Middle Ages time did not stand still and Jacques Coeur is obviously a man of a later period—a contemporary of François Villon, who mentions him somewhere. Of course his financial standing and ethical principles were different.

D. W. FERGUSON.

Valley City, N. D.

Bearded Bayard Taylor

SIR: May I remind Mr. Struthers Burt [The Sealed Verdict," *SRL* Oct. 11] that it was not the "bearded Victorian" Tennyson, but his equally bearded American contemporary, Bayard Taylor, who wrote, "The bravest are the tenderest."

The line occurs in the last stanza of "The Song of the Camp," when "Each heart recalled a different name, But all sang Annie Laurie."

BERTHA BASH.

Palo Alto, Calif.

"Mammon's Little Baby"

SIR: I wish to express my admiration for Miss Margaret Halsey and her superlative article "Mammon's Little Baby" [*SRL* Oct. 18]. I think Miss Halsey's soundness, honesty, and openmindedness are most impressive —and her critical intelligence in evaluating the fundamental issues involved in the production of "literature" is positively inspiring.

HARRIETT BENAIS.

New York, N. Y.

Criminal Verdict

SIR: I suggest that your "verdict" column is not accurate because of your obvious straining for one-word capsule. Use a few more words and don't be afraid of using the same words for different columns.

LES WALLS.

Duarte, Calif.

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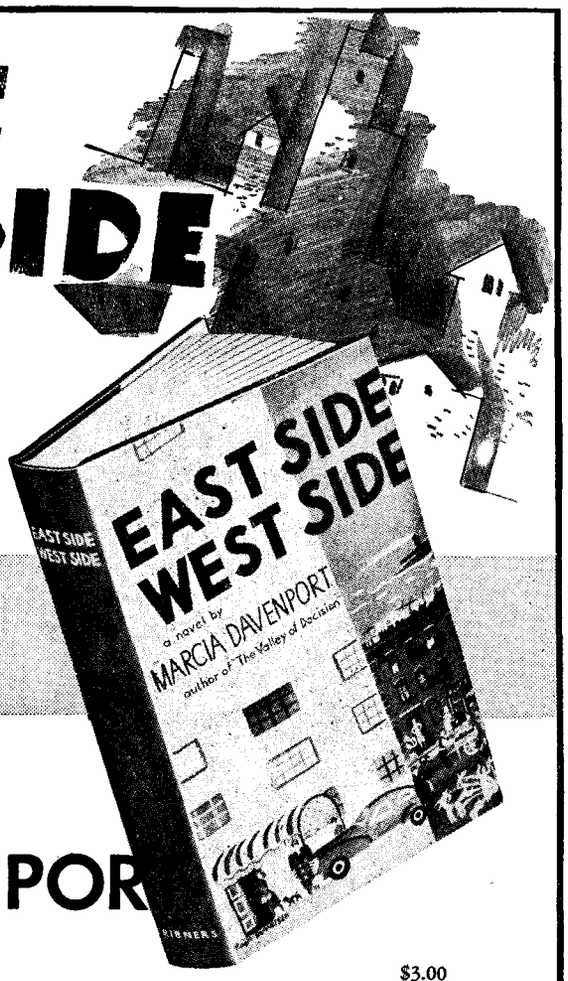

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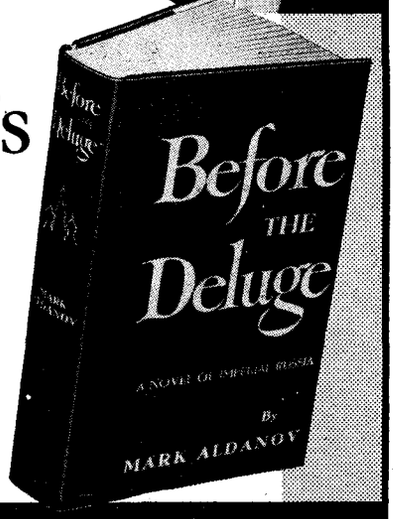

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Seeing Things

GENUINE VIRTUOSITY

THE man and the moment—these were the essentials in Matthew Arnold's recipe for greatness. The two had to be in happy conjunction. Otherwise the right man would be wrong, his greatness unsuspected or misapplied, if the moment of his arrival on the scene were wrong for him.

In the theatre the player and the part can also coincide so that the result is greatness. If not that, a brilliance, an excitement, a rightness, perhaps more accurately an inevitability, any one of which (the opportunity being of sufficient splendor) can prove a cousin of greatness, capable of creating its illusion.

Judith Anderson and "Medea"* are a case in point. Robinson Jeffers has dedicated his free adaptation of the Euripidean tragedy "To Judith Anderson, for whom this was written." No one can be surprised by such a confession; certainly no one who has seen the production or followed Miss Anderson's career. So right is she for Medea, so right is Medea for her, that it almost seems as if Euripides, not Mr. Jeffers, must have had Miss Anderson in mind.

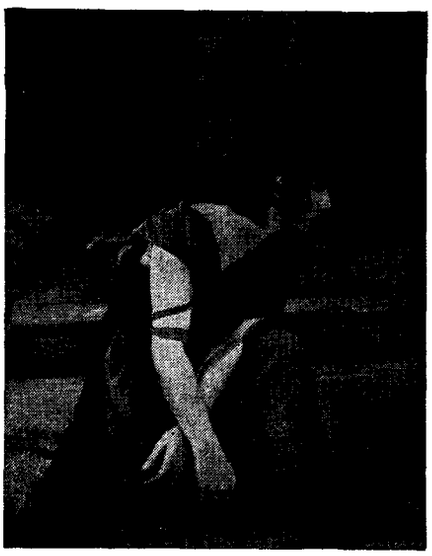
Miss Anderson has been acting in America since 1918. And almost always with distinction. No performer on our stage is a more consummate technician than she. Her acting intelligence is limitless. Beauty she may not have, but interest she does possess; interest ample enough to rank as fascination.

As the mother of Jesus in "Family Portrait," she was all motherhood, without sentimentality though the embodiment of compassion. Yet admirable as was her Mary, virtue is not Miss Anderson's specialty. She excels in parts that are on speaking terms with evil.

The worthless rich woman in "Behold the Bridegroom"; Nina in "Strange Interlude"; The Unknown One in "As You Desire Me"; Lavinia in "Mourning Becomes Electra"; the strong sister in "The Old Maid"; Gertrude in Mr. Gielgud's "Hamlet"; Lady Macbeth opposite Mr. Evans; and, on the screen, Mrs. Danvers in "Rebecca"—such characters as these are the ones we associate with Miss Anderson. They either have or should have coincided with her talents and released her fine gifts. I say *should have released* rather than in every case actually did release her talents, because her Gertrude seemed to me less satisfying than it ought to have been, and her Lady Macbeth a failure, with brilliant moments, in spite of the fact that, by temperament and endowment, Miss Anderson could be the perfect Lady Macbeth of this generation.

Outstanding though she has been in her best parts in the past, one thing is now clear. Her triumphs like her failures at present appear to have been no more than homework for her Medea. Her Colchian princess summarizes and consolidates her previous efforts. It is the crowning achievement of her career. Being accurate as a characterization, her Medea is also a pyrotechnical display, quivering, eruptive, and spectacular. Moreover it is a performance of a scale, freedom, and kind that Miss Anderson alone among our present-day actresses could supply.

E. H. Sothern once insisted that most contemporary players use their hands as if they had been trained as department store clerks. By this he meant that in their gesturing they were as constricted as if they had counters eternally in front of them; that they never moved their elbows away from their ribs, or straightened out their arms, or dared to strike heroic attitudes. Had he lived to see Miss Anderson, Mr. Sothern could have proved his rule by naming her as an exception to it. She is not afraid of acting. She takes to it the way Xenophon's Greeks welcomed the sea. She refuses to be held down by the diminuendoes of a dull realism.



"Judith Anderson's voice crackles like a roaring fire from passion's heat . . . hisses like a pit full of snakes."

Miss Anderson is a virtuoso unashamed of her virtuosity. Her courage in demonstrating her mastery of her craft is uncommon. Most modern actors are forced by the demands of our tea-sipping, telephone-dialing, pistol-packing, cocktail-raising, ash-flicking stage to hide their ability to act. If they can act, they mask this terrifying fact as discreetly as most Americans who wish to be asked out again and not dropped as poseurs or highbrows keep their true culture dark.

ACTORS cannot be blamed for this. They have no other choice than to bow to the will of a public which likes to fancy itself as being tough and literal in a realistic age. To remain employed in a naturalistic theatre, players inevitably limit themselves to being natural and no more. Their pattern of on-stage behavior is not what the kings and queens of tragedy might do in a kingdom of imagination but what the average man or woman would do on a settee, in an office, or over a Bendix in daily life, if certain they were unobserved. Our current actors are trained to dread the grandiose and to fear the expressed emotion almost as much as the emptied one. They tremble before the threat of being called "hams." Understandably but regrettably, the word Smithfield has made cowards of them all. Or nearly all.

Not so Miss Anderson. She approaches antique tragedy unafraid. Playing Medea and playing her to the last drop of cruelty, frenzy, and revenge that is in her, Miss Anderson cannot be expected to do what Hazlitt praised Mrs. Siddons for having done.

"She raised Tragedy to the skies, or brought it down from thence," wrote Hazlitt of the great Sarah. "It was something above nature. We can conceive of nothing grander. She embodied to our imagination the fables of mythology, of the heroic and deified mortals of elder time. She was not less than a goddess, or than a prophetess inspired by the gods. Power was seated on her brow, passion emanated from her breast as from a shrine. She was Tragedy personified. She was the stateliest ornament of the public mind."

* *MEDEA, freely adpated from the "Medea" of Euripides by Robinson Jeffers. Staged by John Gielgud. Settings by Ben Edwards. Costumes by Castillo. Original music by Tibor Serly. Presented by Robert Whitehead and Oliver Rea. With a cast including Judith Anderson, John Gielgud, Florence Reed, Don McHenry, Grace Mills, Kathryn Grill, Leone Wilson, Albert Hecht, Hugh Franklin, etc. At the National Theatre.*

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greatness is the intensity of her hatred.

Mr. Jeffers has not attempted the impossible task of prettifying the Medea story. He has employed his poet's skill to streamline the text, to bring it closer to the contemporary stage, to rid its speeches of those stylistic villainies of which E. P. Coleridge was guilty in his translation. Mr. Jeffers's language, though not always satisfactory, has about it—at its best—a driving, iron quality that Gilbert Murray's more liquid version cannot claim. What it loses as poetry, it gains as theatre. Its tension is undeniable, and is immediately communicated by Miss Anderson.

No dynamo could surpass her in energy. As she moves up and down the steps of the cheerless palace Ben Edwards has designed for her, her body is always at the command of her emotions. She uses gestures that are large, bold, and varied. Her arms speak a language of their own. Her voice, which is uncommon both in its range and timbre, can wheedle, plead, accuse, or mock. At one moment it crackles like a roaring fire from passion's heat. At the next it hisses like a pit full of snakes.

Some of my confreres, I note, have contended that, excellent as Miss Anderson is as Medea, she starts her first act at so high a pitch that she cannot hope to top it in her second. This may have been true on the first night. I know only that, when I saw her later in the run, Miss Anderson's command of her performance was so undeviating that there was no hint of anticlimax in the awful horror of her final scenes.

From what I had read I had been prepared to find Mr. Gielgud's Jason disappointing. The part is certainly a thankless one. Yet to me, Mr. Gielgud, who always reads intelligently, seemed as effective as any man could hope to be in Medea's presence. Helmeted and hidden behind a borrowed beard as he was, I must confess I would never have recognized him, had I not known that he was playing Jason. No doubt this is some kind of compliment in itself.

What bothered me about Mr. Gielgud was his direction, not his acting. It seemed stodgy. It lacked the qualities of ultimate ignition. It had the repertory touch of adequacy without inspiration. I was especially unhappy about his casting and handling of the three women who formed the Chorus. The Chorus is always a problem in a Greek play. These particular crones of Corinth remained, for me at least, an unsolved problem. I could not help thinking in their presence, with Medea bursting to confide in them all her innermost secrets, how

Bach: Goldberg Variations

By Fred Lape

SO YOU could not sleep, Count Kaiserling,
poor fellow, and called upon a friend
to write some pieces for your tedious hours?

But you got more than you bargained for.
Maybe some match within your spirit
struck into flame the fuel of Johann's mind,
and so the atoms made flesh were made again,
they breathed in sound, they sang down time.
But did they soothe the pains of your neuralgia?
In the aria, beautiful as a knife edge,
out of this dust compounded, to this dust
returned, did you find your solace?
Or did the joy and anguish of your past
rise up and walk before you in the night?
Did all the complex rhythms of your days
come back and sweep and coil about you?
The happiness ended, the loved ones gone,
intrude like living ghosts within your mind,
before the surf of joyous music washed you free?

No way to know. The record merely says
that you were pleased and paid him well.
You sleep a long sleep now, Count Kaiserling,
and Johann rests his head in the same land.
Or do you sometimes sing a *quod libet* together?
That too no record tells. So in my darkness,
and for your river of sound that washes me,
I say you both goodnight and pleasant dreams.

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easy the life of a gossip columnist would have been in ancient Greece.

Albert Hecht is an acceptable Creon. Florence Reed, in spite of a costume which makes her resemble a venerable shepherd who has wandered in from "A Winter's Tale," is fine as the Nurse. She humanizes the part, speaking it not only with unflagging comprehension but with a voice of great power and beauty.

The evening, however, is, as it was bound to be, Miss Anderson's. Magnificient as she is, I cannot pretend for a split second that either she or the production to which she lends such incontestable distinction possessed for me the unforgettable excitement of Laurence Olivier's Oedipus. I discovered that I kept on admiring (as anyone would have to admire) so superlative a technical performance. Yet somehow, even when I wanted to applaud, I remained unmoved. Mine was that strange, cheated feeling one would have if left cold when standing before a blazing fire.

"Include me out," said Mr. Goldwyn. This is precisely what Miss Anderson's Medea did for me, brilliant though her acting is, and grateful as I am to her for being one modern player who remains unashamed of the glories of the craft.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

One on the Aisle

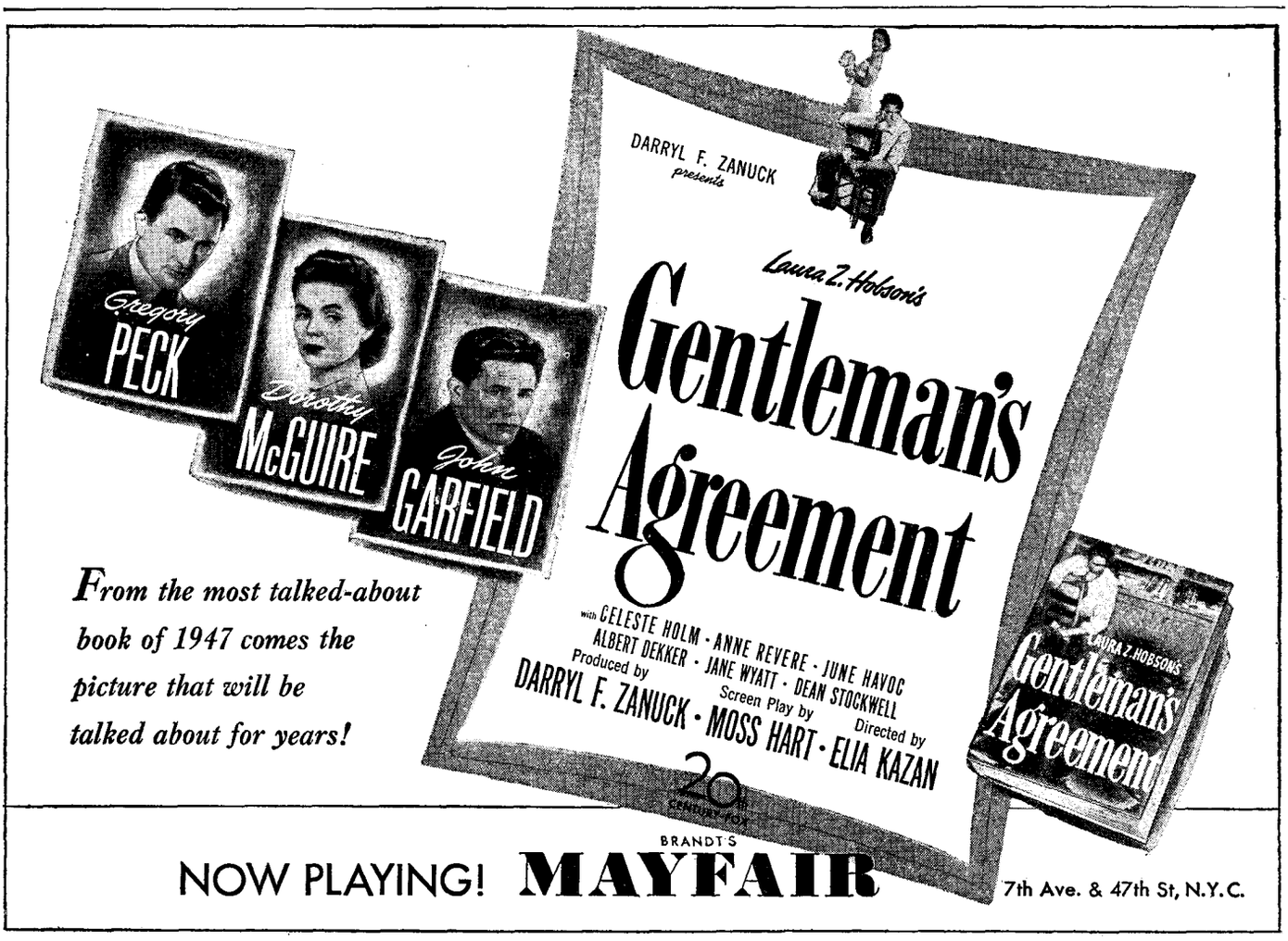
THE THEATRE BOOK OF THE YEAR, 1946-1947. By George Jean Nathan. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 1947. 376 pp. $4.

Reviewed by LEWIS NICHOLS

PROBABLY the Broadway theatre continues for a few reasons other than the obvious one—that George Jean Nathan wishes to attend it. Those reasons often seem minor. They seem almost negligible each autumn when, after spending the summer digesting his dinner, Mr. Nathan reports on the season before. For his "Theatre Book of the Year"—in the current case, that of 1946-1947—is not only a history of the local stage, but also that of George Jean Nathan. The two have become synonymous, and what each would do without the other, no one knows. Luckily this grisly experiment of divorce never has been tried, although in morning-after annoyance, the theatre sometimes would be prepared to take its chances.

In Mr. Nathan's case, the love of the theatre surpasses all else including that of woman, which, after all, is small potatoes in comparison. Year after year he sits in his seat along the aisle, a dean who is outwardly gloomy and who would no doubt stop speaking to anyone accusing him of sentiment. Yet he is sentimental about the theatre. He is prepared to forget last night's little shambles, being certain that tonight's will be better and tomorrow's will be the perfect play of all time. This is written on every page of his year book where, after the most heated denunciations of incompetence and irrelevancy, he never once hints he is going back to the Royalton and stay there. Instead of corpuscles, his bloodstream by now is made up of acts and actors.

This is his fifth yearly summary, but the other theatre writings of George Jean Nathan date back roughly to the early Middle Ages. This is the fifth yearly summary, and the writings still are fresh, alive, and readable. The hings their author has seen in a lifetime of clumsily lifted curtains would cause madness in an average mind, but that of Mr. Nathan is so far from average he is not even bored. A bad play may be dismissed, but the theatre will go on. And the bad play in question always can be a springboard for the annual thoughts on Hollywood writers, the younger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critics, and the necessity for pretty girls in the only place they count—the Forties.

The operation of "Theatre Book of the Year" can be shown in the case of "What Every Woman Knows," which was revived on a November night last year. Mr. Nathan did not care for the production, but it made him think of other revivals, and that, in turn, leads into a discussion of what plays are worth seeing more than once or twice. Some of them are, he concedes, such plays as "Oedipus," "Hamlet," "The Way of the World." On the other hand, "Candida," "The Front Page," and others do not require several visits before their "full import" is assimilated. At this point, he expects someone to accuse him of being blasé, and he notes, "If blasé means either tired or cynical," that refers to someone other than he. Obviously not blasé, he then goes on to suggest that young actresses not try immediately to be Juliet, or Maggie Wylie, but first to play well the lowly maid. He then lists stars who have done so.

Those Nathan listings of stars and plays speckle the pages of his year books, and the italic weight of evidence on his side always is overwhelming. This is the cumulative method of argument, and since Mr. Nathan's card index must be kept better than anyone else's, there can be no disputing the fact that last night's comedy was similar to fifty-three produced in America and thirty-two in Paris. Speckled, too, through the pages are the author's random thoughts on strong drink, on Oscar Wilde, on pageants, on the motion-picture production code. Denouncing too much literalness in this age, he once suggests an actorless stage given over completely to sound, or a stage where only colored lights would represent the actors—this, that audiences might use their imaginations.

While "The Theatre Book of the Year" is showing the course of George Jean Nathan through the year, it also has facts in addition to theories and critical appraisal. The cast for each play offered during the season is listed, with the date, producer, director, and length of run. Appended, too, is Mr. Nathan's own honor roll. His personal record shows that for last season "The Iceman Cometh" was the best drama, "The Fatal Weakness" the best comedy, "Finian's Rainbow" the best musical, and Ralph Richardson and Ina Claire, in "Henry IV" and "The Fatal Weakness," respectively, were the best performers.

Mr. Nathan was not bad, either.

LITERARY I.Q. ANSWERS

1. Kringelein, in "Grand Hotel," by Vicki Baum. 2. Gabriel, in "No Trouble At All," from "Hotel Bemelmans, by Ludwig Bemelmans. 3. Theodore Racksole, in "Grand Babylon Hotel," by Arnold Bennett. 4. Billy Magee, in "Seven Keys to Baldpate," by Earl Derr Biggers. 5. Stephen Sorrell, in "Sorrell and Son," by Warwick Deeping. 6. "Chad Hanna," by Walter D. Edmonds. 7. Myron Weagle, in "Work of Art," by Sinclair Lewis. 8. Gordon Miller, in "Room Service," by John Murray and Allen Boretz. 9. Harry Van, in "Idiot's Delight," by Robert E. Sherwood. 10. Bill Jones, in "Lightnin'," by Winchell Smith and John L. Golden.

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THE NEXT STEP

(*Continued from page 18*)

I asked. "Do these people attack New York because they think really that life is better elsewhere?"

"Don't they, though!" he said. "Just look around you. What play has been most popular in New York these last years? A play about life in Oklahoma. And then there is 'Brigadoon' which idealizes life in Scotland, and when a play has anything agreeable to say about New York it's about New York of two generations ago, like 'Life with Father.' Everything is said to be better than New York. In music, for example, it's far harder to get tickets for the Boston than for any local orchestra, and unfailingly we are told by interested parties (the *Times* critic comes from Boston) that the Boston really *is* a better orchestra. And now the radio programs are coming from Hollywood. And where are week-ends being spent? In New York with its wonderful museums and restaurants and concerts and theatres? No. In Connecticut and Pennsylvania. Mark my words, this vogue of the week-end is the opening wedge. Once you wean people away from New York for the week-end it won't be hard to get them to stay away altogether."

"Has there," I asked, "been support for the Un-New York movement in intellectual circles?"

"Certainly," said Paul. "You'll find it invading the works of the most serious thinkers and teachers. Our young men and women are being taught right here in colleges, some of them colleges supported by our own city funds, that life as lived in New York is perhaps *not* the acme of existence, that there are other and simpler ways of existence more rewarding. Scientists pretend on the basis of scientific researches to subscribe to the notion that there are baneful effects from noise in New York. Even the climate is assaulted. It is further suggested that for three or four months New York is unbearably hot and four or five months wretchedly damp and cold. Even spring in New York, these propagandists say, is a short rainy spell between arctic cold and tropic heat. As I said, it's high time for our inquiry or, as President Hoover used to say, there'll be grass growing in the streets soon. Everyone will have fled to out-of-town, or worse still New York will be like out-of-town."

"Whom will you get to testify at your inquiry?" I asked.

"Seven and a half million New Yorkers," said Paul.

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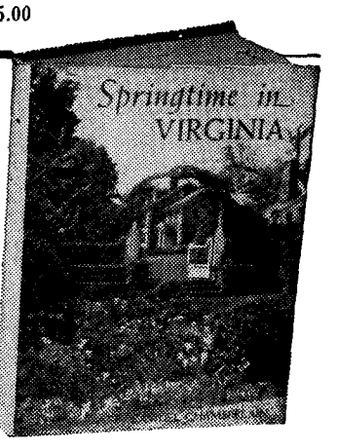

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Belles-Lettres.

France has been the real home of the individualist, from the tight-fisted French paysan *with his plot of land to the most fiercely independent of poets like the brilliant, dissolute, tortured Arthur Rimbaud. One of the Symbolists, who derived their poetry in part from our own Edgar Allan Poe, Rimbaud has in return greatly influenced the art of our own recent poets. Certainly Gertrude Stein, whose last book is reviewed below, though not a poet, imbibed some of her fascination with the sound of words from the Symbolist poets of her beloved France. . . . Less well known here than Rimbaud, the socialist Péguy, again a fierce individualist, championed with Zola the civil rights of that Dreyfus whose strange* affaire, *minutely analyzed in Wilhelm Herzog's recent "Dreyfus to Petain," rocked France for a generation.*

Competent Priestess

FOUR IN AMERICA. By Gertrude Stein. With an introduction by Thornton Wilder. New Haven: Yale University Press. 1947. 221 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by JAMES GRAY

IN ONE of her more exuberant moments as represented by the text of "Four in America," Gertrude Stein wrote: "I will tell you all there is about American."

This was, even for her, a little sweeping. All that she meant to do in this characteristic work, written ten years before her death when she was at the height of her power to influence the minds of others, was to explore the creative process as it had revealed itself in four very different types of Americans. She chose Grant, Wilbur Wright, Henry James, and George Washington probably because their talents seemed to her to bound the country of the imagination.

I find the kernel of what she wished to communicate about the creative process in these lines:

> On the other hand if you know these things although the time will or will not come that you will know these things, then you write as one who has been allowed to know these things without knowing them.

Gertrude Stein's view of a problem which has engaged the minds of philoscphers and artists from the time when instinct first began to whisper its secrets to consciousness was that superior men are able to create because they bear special passports to the unknown and are at home in its realm. The power of flight existed in the unknown, and Wilbur Wright, his instinct far better instructed than any amount of teaching could have made it, found the physical form, in the airplane, to enclose and control that power. The idea of democracy existed in the unknown and George Washington helped to compose the forms that gave it reality.

Another basic idea seems to have animated Gertrude Stein's exploration of the problem. It is, I think, that the creative process is impelled by the same kind of power no matter what may be its manifestation. She undertook, in developing this belief, to show how each of her representative Americans would have expressed his genius if he had been in some very different relation to the problems of human experience. If Grant had been a religious leader he would have lighted the spark in the minds of others at camp meetings that he lighted in the camps of his soldiers. If Henry James had been a general he would have marshaled his forces, under the instruction of his special knowledge of subtle movements of mind and spirit, in much the same way that he marshaled his forces in fiction.

This is to make the pattern of her thinking seem perhaps quite banal.

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She, of course, triumphantly eluded the threat of commonplaceness by her manner. It was her gift as a person and as a writer, too, I think, to breathe excitement back into ideas threatened by death from suffocation in the close rooms where they had been mulled over too long. She was a priestess of ideas and, like any competent priestess, she understood the power of incantation.

The repetitions that have been cited so often by those who wish to reject her as a childish (or, perhaps, a mad) spirit were intended to have the effect that they have in music. In each of Gertrude Stein's work, it is easy, if one is willing to be patient and trusting, to find the theme, to follow all the variations on it, to discover with pleasure how she plays upon it, modifies it, elaborates it, achieves teasing, provocative, amusing effects with it. And then it becomes easier still to discover her in the ingenious act of introducing a second theme to support the first, to carry on little duels and conversations with it so that, in the end, her follower is refreshed by a belief in the honesty and the importance of what she is about.

"Listen" is the key word of these essays. The creative man listens to the promptings of the unknown. He does not listen to himself for that would be simply to make a trick of his talent. He does not above all listen to what his audience hopes he will say and then dutifully give it back, for that would be to throw away his passport to the unknown. He listens, as Joan of Arc did, to his voices.

Many people went to see and hear Gertrude Stein while she lived, flattering their egos with the thought that they would find a grotesque maunderer at whom they could jeer. Many such people, quite unresistingly from the start, yielded to her magic. It was, in part, the magic of a great human warmth. In none of her books as well as in this one did she manage to communicate that warmth to the page. In "Four in America" she took a reader inside her mind with an air of almost maternal confiding. She shared the intimacies of her own mental process, wooing, cajoling, tempting the imagination on. "Do you begin to see?" she asked again and again, often adding a fervent "Oh yes, yes."

And in the end you do begin to see what was the source of her power over Sherwood Anderson and Picasso and Whitehead and the GI's of the Second World War. It was the urgency of an honest and vigorous person who believed that the creative life is—to borrow the words she once used to describe Paris—"exciting and peaceful," and that out of it come all the good things of our world.

NORTON

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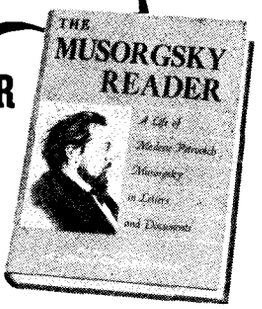

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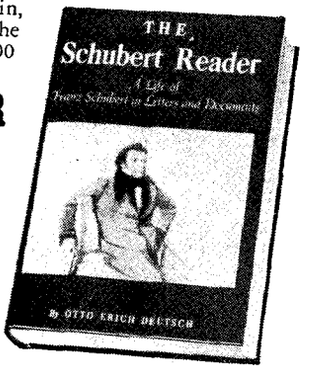

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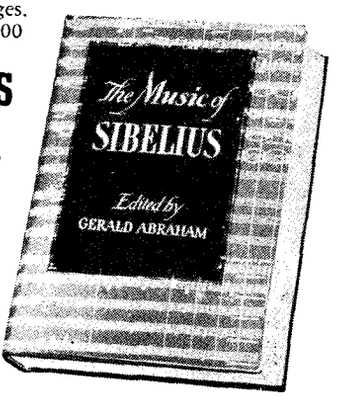

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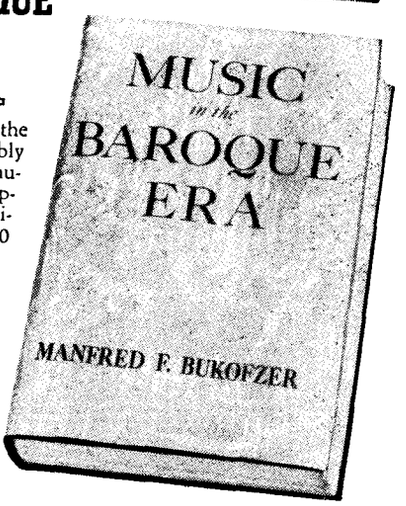

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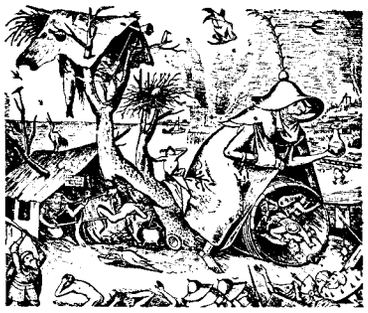

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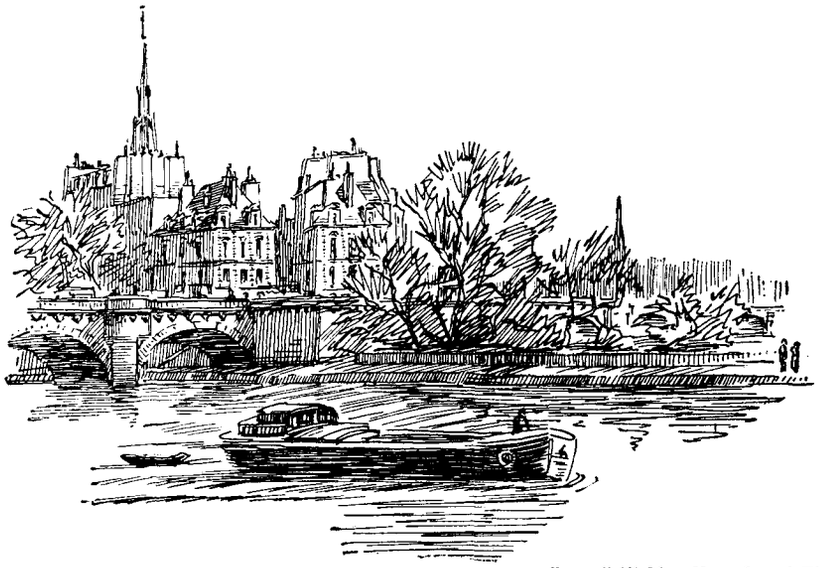

—From "All Men Have Loved Thee."

Evil Genius?

ARTHUR RIMBAUD. By Enid Starkie. New York: W. W. Norton & Co. 1947. 464 pp. $5.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

ARTHUR RIMBAUD has proved a troublesome subject for both biographers and translators; while the first have often become lost in the obscurities of his life, the second have more often strayed amidst the denser obscurities of his writing. The dual result has been a mass of misinformation and misinterpretation. Now, however, Enid Starkie comes close to setting the record straight, at once for poet and poetry. Not that she essays translation. On the contrary, she is content to let Rimbaud speak his own unique French. But she does interpret the burden of that French with remarkable insight.

Back in 1938, Dr. Starkie, who is reader in French at the University of Oxford and probably the foremost English student of Baudelaire, published a biography of Rimbaud, in an edition that had only a limited distribution in this country. The present work represents a thorough reconsideration, revision, and enlargement of that volume. The author has drawn on new sources of material, established new facts, and in many cases corrected statements of earlier biographers and critics. Among other achievements, she has unearthed Rimbaud's interest in Cabalism and alchemy, and has carefully studied their influence on his patterns of thought and expression, thereby shedding light on many poetic passages previously blanketed in darkness.

The threads of life and writing are skilfully interwoven. Under Dr. Starkie's guidance, we follow Rimbaud's character and actions from the day of his birth at Charleville, in October 1854, to the hour of his death at Marseilles, in November 1891. The model schoolboy, the rebellious hooligan, the precocious genius, the scandal of artistic Paris and the homosexual companion of Verlaine, the fugitive from literature, the wanderer, trader, Abyssinian gun-runner, the dying and defeated man—one by one their features are exposed to us, under the best light that scholarship can bring to bear. And simultaneously the written word, from the poet's Parnassian beginnings, through "Le Bateau Ivre" and "Les Illuminations," to the final agony of "Une Saison en Enfer," is subjected to the most intelligent and informing scrutiny. Literary influences are noted and weighed: Parnasse, Izambard, Cabalists, alchemy, Ballanche, Baudelaire. Pages and chapters are spent in studying the development of Rimbaud's theory of poetry: his conception of the poet as seer, as the voice of the Eternal, capable of exploring infinite mysteries; and his companionable conception of the power of the word-in-itself, its magical potency, independent of logical meaning. Here the poet drank deep of Ballanche, and with him saw visions. "According to Ballanche the earliest times, when speech reigned supreme above thought, was the time of poetry and imagination. When thought became more important the time of reason began: words were then used to express abstract conceptions and they consequently lost their power of suggesting sensations and intuitions." The result of Dr. Starkie's critical labors, to put it briefly, is that Rimbaud's "elliptical and hermetic" poetry is now clarified as it has never been before.

The crucial question in any study of Rimbaud is, of course: Why did he renounce literature when he was only twenty years old, with an aston-

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ishing achievement already his, and a future of limitless promise? Many answers have been given. Dr. Starkie gives her own, and documents it persuasively. Her thesis is that Rimbaud "at the height of his greatest creative activity, believed, like Faust, he had acquired supernatural powers through the agency of magic, that he imagined, like him, he had become the equal of God and eventually that his sin of pride and arrogance had been as great, as deserving of condemnation." From the heaven of the *voyant*, he was plunged into a hell of disillusionment, in which he wrote his farewell to his former faith. It was not, Dr. Starkie suggests, a farewell to literature as a whole, but only to poetry as he had practised it. "His theory now was that literature was to be prosaic and rational, devoid of symbolism, that was the form most suited to the modern world." Yet the fact remains that he was forever after silent.

Whether this theory corresponds to the literal truth, or to Rimbaud's poetic and even hysterical version of the truth, is comparatively unimportant, for it is, in either case, serviceable and illuminating.

Besides the major question, there are minor ones to plague the student of Rimbaud. Why, for example, was he abruptly transformed from the model schoolboy into an offensive, insolent, and filthy hooligan, who had to spit at life? Here Dr. Starkie permits herself to conjecture, and thereafter builds on what is her one important guess.

> At sixteen, when he went to Paris, he still looked like a girl [she writes]. It is probable that he then received his first initiation into sex and in so brutal and unexpected a manner that he was startled and outraged, and that his whole nature recoiled from it with fascinated disgust.

This is indeed a guess, for no chapter and verse can be quoted, but it is based upon the biographer's whole knowledge of her subject, it is for her the truth she reads in the writings, and it is probably the best guess possible.

Dr. Starkie's attitude towards Rimbaud is one of complete sympathy and understanding; yet she spares him nothing. Her treatment of his relations with Verlaine, for instance, is as candid as possible. Still it must be noted that, although she does not spare him, she is rather ready to forgive and forget; a readiness that at least once leads to inconsistency. It was not, as she suggests late in her book, Rimbaud's "cold honesty" that made him unacceptable to decent Parisians, but the facts, abundantly documented by herself, that he

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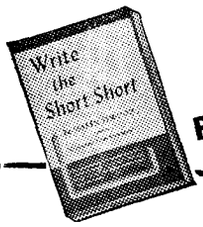

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was boorish, obscene, and verminous. I also find it rather hard to share her conviction that Rimbaud's life of debauch "was for him one long martyrdom." His native talent for debauch seems to have been considerable. But, whatever questions may still remain regarding this poet, our debt to Enid Starkie is enormous.

One important question certainly does remain, and that regards his influence. It may be his biographer exaggerates somewhat when she writes:

> No poet in the world today is the object of more study and interest —not even Baudelaire. There is no movement in literature, in whatever country it may be, that does not owe its origins to him, though he himself would have disclaimed sympathy with most of their views.

But there is a large content of truth in her statement, and so we must ask ourselves whether Rimbaud's influence has, on the whole, been good or bad. My own judgment is against it. That he has been a seminal and liberating force, there can be no doubt, but he has sown the seeds of irresponsibility and he has written a charter for those who would escape into private worlds. Unable to face reality throughout his life, he did not face it in his poetry. His influence has been all in favor of the irrational, the subconscious, the anti-intellectual; his faith in incantations, devoid of precise meaning, his faith in the word-in-itself (creeds that he repudiated at the end of his writing life), have been embraced by unworthy imitators who have drugged themselves with sounds, lovely or furious, that have often signified nothing. During certain periods of the world's history, this private play might have been viewed, reasonably enough, with an amused tolerance. But it seems to me that the present days are too grim for such indulgence; that even poets are now called upon to face reality. Even they, I think, should make sense; the best sense they can possibly make. Rimbaud, on the contrary, as his most intelligent admirers are the first to admit, often made no sense at all; unfortunately, it is his most abstruse work that has proved most influential.

Genius he was beyond doubt, but it may well be that he is an evil genius for our times. For never in man's history has it been more important that we should hold and implement the belief which E. M. Forster attributes to Roger Fry: "the belief that man is, or rather can be, rational, and that mind can and should guide the passions towards civilization."

Fiery Frenchman

CHARLES PEGUY. By Daniel Halévy. New York: Longmans, Green & Co. 1947. 304 *pp.* $3.50.

Reviewed by ETHEL CAMP HUGLI

NO WRITER ever really dies who inspires a devoted researcher to bring him and his work back to life. Thus Charles-Pierre Péguy, that fiery Frenchman, one of the first of the French literati mown down in 1914, experiences a resurrection through his friend Daniel Halévy in a biography dated 1918 and reissued in 1941. The present edition of 1947 is an evocative volume in a fluid, readable English and a really remarkable rendering of excerpts of French verse.

Charles Péguy was truly a "fiery Frenchman." The very alliteration throws sparks. To be born in 1873 meant to reach maturity in the high excitement of a *fin de siècle* world where anything might be expected to happen. To Péguy it meant involvement in the Dreyfus Case and a lifelong combatting of anti-Semitism. In his fearless approach to the *"Affaire"* he emerged from being an obscure young hot-head, to become one of the most burning partisans of the martyred French officer.

Physically Péguy was a small, pugnacious, irascible man with a mystic capacity for attracting and keeping

"In every living creature is Woman, Man, and Child"

—W. H. AUDEN

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Black Bethlehem

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friends. An early photograph shows a round head, a vast forehead, vague young whiskers along his jaw and a small, well-kept mustache above a mouth with sweet but firm lines. But his eyes are the compelling eyes of a fanatic, vowed to truth and justice, and willing to go to the stake for the sake of them.

Charles Péguy, a posthumous child, sprang from the people and lived and worked for their betterment. The social revolution was his theme and he abode by it all his life. His grandmother could neither read nor write. His mother was a mender of rush-bottomed chairs, but, "the *best* one in all Orleans." In his early maturity the passionate growth of Péguy's spirit found the restrictions of the *Ecole Normale* too confining and he left without waiting to get his diploma. Later, full of his socialist creed, he contracted a civil marriage with a woman of his own political faith, omitting the religious ceremony.

Péguy wrote of his life in the *Ecole Supérieure*, "Everything was pure then, everything young. A young socialism, a socialism still rather ponderous, rather childish, a young man's socialism, had just been born." His loyalty counted on an eternal continuation of early friendships.

But socialism, no longer "pure," no longer "young," finally weighed on Péguy with its masses and their steamy insistence, its voters, its threats against the government, its everlasting demands for money and for laws in its favor. He did not leave the party but he did withdraw and, gathering his loyal comrades around him, he founded *Les Cahiers de la Quinzaine*, with notable contributors such as Romain Rolland, Jaurès, Maurras, and others. This fortnightly was hailed with pessimism by his socialist friends who jeered, "Your *Cahiers* won't last six months." "We shall see," retorted Péguy. The publication became the center of the new intellectual movement in France. It is impossible to exaggerate the importance of the *Cahiers* which spread ideas profoundly stirring to the men of those times as well as our own.

But although Péguy remained with the Socialist Party he did his work apart from them. And in his intellectual evolution he was no longer a Christian. "I shall fight the Christion religion," he said, for his passionate desire was salvation for all, and that desire could not be realized within the confines of the Church. However, the mystic strain in the man eventually catalyzed his theories of "brotherhood and God" with a return at long last to the Church.

In a certain way Péguy suffered from intellectual claustrophobia. He would not be cribb'd, cabin'd, and confined in his school, or in his religion, or even in his socialism. He burst away from the first two and kept the last-named at a distance lest it own him.

This biography is a tribute from a friend to a genius. After a life of combat, a soldier's death. And after a period of silence, this book, a shining resurrection of Charles Péguy and his ideas.

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"HALF the people who call on doctors are sick in mind as well as in body. To describe their trouble, doctors now use the word psychosomatic (from the Greek *psyche*, mind, and *soma*, body). Last week a top-rank woman practitioner of psychosomatic medicine, Dr. Flanders Dunbar of Columbia University's College of Physicians and Surgeons, published a fascinating book on the subject. (*Mind and Body;* Random House; $3.50).

"Psychosomatic patients do not just imagine their ailments, Dr. Dunbar points out; they may be seriously or fatally ill of real diseases. An upset mind, she says, can actually bring on or aggravate heart disease, diabetes, stomach ulcers, asthma, tuberculosis.

"The history books, Dr. Dunbar hints, are full of examples of psychosomatic illness. British Prime Minister William Gladstone developed a 'diplomatic cold' whenever he faced a difficult or distasteful debate. Elizabeth Barrett, browbeaten daughter of a tyrannical father, was a bedridden invalid for 20 years—and was cured almost overnight when, at the age of 40, she met and married Robert Browning. In the *Ode to a Nightingale*, observes Dr. Dunbar, John Keats wrote a perfect, succinct description of a psychosomatic patient: 'I have been half in love with easeful Death.'

"Like most psychiatrists, Dr. Dunbar looks for the roots of psychosomatic illness in an unhappy childhood: 'There is such a thing as emotional contagion. The youngest infant can be infected with fear or anger or disgust or horror even more easily than with the measles.' Infected with such fears, he grows up unusually susceptible to disease and accidents (forms of escape or self-punishment).

"Some 80% of all accidents, Dr. Dunbar believes, have a neurotic basis. Many of them show a common pattern: a timely fracture that extricates the victim from a crisis.

"Diseases, too, fall into characteristic psychosomatic patterns for Dr. Dunbar. Diabetics are generally spoiled and jealous as children, and develop deep-seated sexual conflicts. Heart patients are often tense, hard-working and ambitious. People with asthma and other allergy diseases tend to have suppressed sex desires.

"In treating psychosomatic patients, says Dr. Dunbar, the problem is to 'lighten (the patient's) self-imposed sentence'."—*TIME*

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Humor.

Fred Allen says that H. Allen Smith is "the screwball's Boswell" whose pen is dedicated "to the riff and the raff . . . to those who slink through life fraught with insignificance." The wacky author of "Low Man on a Totem Pole" has now revisited the scenes of his childhood. Since the only thing Smith can remember about the first twelve years of his life is that at the age of five he fell into an empty cistern, and at six fell out of a barn loft, Smith fans will know what to expect from this master of irrelevant digression . . . Americans, from Mark Twain forward and backward, have always loved the wacky gag, the tall story, screwball humor, some of it good, most of it bad. Congressmen, it appears from "Laughing with Congress," are no exception to the rule.

"How Corny Can You Get?"

LAUGHING WITH CONGRESS. By the Honorable Alexander Wiley. New York: Crown Publishers. 1947. 228 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by LEE ROGOW

I'VE HEARD of Senators with guitars and Senators with cowboy boots, but this is the first time I've come across one who has a gag file. The Honorable Alexander Wiley, Republican Senator from Wisconsin, is a sure-enough joke collector. He has crowded into this collection darn near every joke of, by, and for Congress.

In his introduction the Senator assures us he has done his best to "keep the humor politically balanced," but he constantly slips in his own archconservative politics like a file into a convict's cake.

While I am not impressed by the gentleman's claims to objectivity, I am full of admiration for the way he does his homework. It happens I've been callousing my thumb on joke books for the past eighteen months; I speak with the voice of experience when I say Senator Wiley has spent a lot of time in the laugh library. There are jokes here about elections, politicians, legislative processes, office procedure, ladies in Congress, feuds among the members, party politics, and even a brace of gags from the constituents. There's a sprinkling of quotes from Artemus Ward, Will Rogers, and a very funny chap named Lincoln.

On the whole, the Senator's laugh average is about the same as that of other joke books—ten baddies to one goodie—and fifty light years behind the standards of a Bennett Cerf job.

The most revealing portions of the book are those dealing with jokes made by members of Congress on the floor. It turns out Senator Wiley is not the only fellow in the upper chamber who dips into such volumes as "Ten Thousand Jokes, Toasts and Stories for All Occasions." The gentlemen who are entrusted with the welfare of the nation are not above reciting the most outrageously old gags as charming bits of autobiography.

Well, you can't get mad at that. Almost anybody who wants to be funny in public finds himself doing that once in a while. And it's hard to blame the members for a little polite plagiarism when you read the unhappy jokes they make up themselves:

> Senator Long: "I ask consent for a radio address of mine to be printed in the *Record*. And a mighty good speech it is, too."
> Senator Robinson: "It couldn't be a good speech if the Senator from Louisiana made it."

The author, by the way, fancies himself a tricky fellow in the repartee department, and quotes generously from himself to prove it. I'm afraid even his campaign manager couldn't

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work up a convincing giggle for the samples included, which are what Morey Amsterdam describes as "no-joke jokes."

Senator Tobey: "Will the Senator from Wisconsin please pronounce Bretton Woods correctly? It jangles my nerves to hear it called Bray-ton Woods."

Senator Wiley: "I thank the Senator, but I am not so sure he is correct. It depends on whether one is in Wisconsin, New Hampshire, on the high seas, or in Britain, Brittany or elsewhere. I am sorry the Senator's nerves are so tender.

Senator Tobey: "If the Senator were to call it Bray-ton Woods in New Hampshire, he might not come out alive."

Senator Wiley: "I do not care to enter into that discussion."

I'm not making this up. It's on page 145.

It's interesting, in a kind of sickening way, to note how often the members of Congress tell, and how often Mr. Wiley quotes, the kind of tired-out and tasteless wheeze in which a colored man (named Mose, of course) gets up at a revival meeting and says, "Bruddern and sistern, you all knows and I knows dat I ain't been what I orter been. I'se robbed hen roosts and tole lies and got drunk and slashed folks with my razor, but ah danks de Lord der is one thing I ain't nebber done; I ain't lost my religion!"

Which furnishes an answer to the current Broadway question, "How corny can you get?"

The book, I notice, is dedicated "To the Happiness of the People of Wisconsin and of All America; and of Their Children and Their Children's Children."

Mr. Wiley, it would appear, plans to be in office a long time.

Charlie Sands

By Margaret Stavely

I CANNOT be with Charlie Sands again. They say he's dead,
and so the rapture in his hands
on which my senses fed
is gone, and solitude of rivers
wraps up in me instead.

I will not grieve for Charlie Sands
out loud, and mourn his name,
because for me the world demands
a decent show of shame,
and branding Charlie with my guilt,
is not my kind of game.

But, having known one Charlie Sands,
my first, alas, my last,
my heart, the vagrant, understands
that what came once went fast,
and only babies chase with tears
the unreturning past.

Hero's Return

LO, THE FORMER EGYPTIAN! By H. Allen Smith. New York: Doubleday & Co. 1947. 212 pp. $2.

Reviewed by RICHARD A. CORDELL

FOR many years H. Allen Smith harbored a fawning adoration for Theodore Dreiser and his books. When he recently read for the first time the novelist's "A Hoosier Holiday," a solemn account of an automobile tour of his native state in 1915, he determined to revisit scenes of his early years in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. "Lo, the Former Egyptian!" is the amusing record of this journey—or ostensibly so; as a matter of fact, it is one part Midwest Holiday and nine parts digression. To use his own phrase, his memories form a sort of goofy montage. The title is more sensible than it appears: Smith was born in the southernmost part of Illinois, which is called Egypt, and which at one time or another was also the home of other celebrities—Borah, Pontiac,

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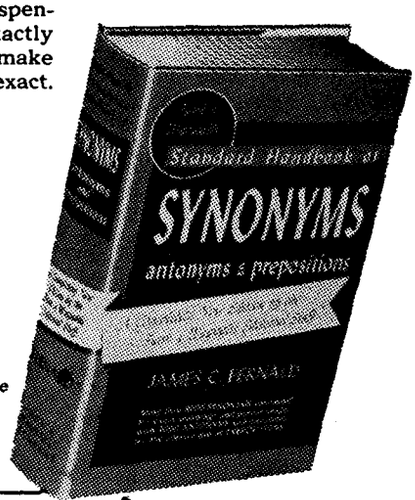

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Bryan, Ingersoll, Mike Romanoff, and the creators of Moon Mullins and Popeye.

Although not a series of contretemps, the peregrination was not so triumphant as he had foreseen it. He discovered that he lacks Thomas Wolfe's ability to remember incidents and feelings of his didy days—although he proved that he could go home again and survive radiantly. Unlike Dreiser he could not churn with emotion as he stood in front of boyhood homes. He hunted up the Idle Hour, a pleasure resort near Huntington, Indiana, where he had spent the happiest hours of his youth; but all he found was a rectangular clearing with a placid nannygoat chewing a vulgar cud. When he autographed his books in an Indianapolis department store, Spike Jones at the same hour in the music section stole his hour of glory from him. He found his home town in the process of honoring another native son, the national commander of the American Legion. As a final anticlimax his many relatives could not agree on his birthplace, and there was considerable uncertainty about the year of his birth.

Most of the digressions are delightful anecdotes, historical asides, examination of the Sinatra and Dale Carnegie daffiness, Leacock-like essays on pool halls, staying with relatives, Indiana literature, small-town journalism, eating habits, gaudy funerals, etc. Throughout is a continuous needling of affectation and snobbishness, and his wife makes many peppery and waspish comments on the Hero's Return. Almost the only serious lines in the book are devoted to praise of the American Guide Series, courtesy of WPA. His account of his parents is affectionate but unsentimental. His fantastic suggestions for improving the Indianapolis Speedway races will appeal to every driver of an automobile.

There are H. Allen Smith enthusiasts who relish every wacky line he writes; there are others who like him up to a certain point. Readers in this second group will probably prefer this pleasant little autobiographical fragment to his other books. There is an agreeable restraint which in no way dampens his natural exuberance, and he nearly always remembers that it is better to tell four-fifths of a joke than six-fifths.

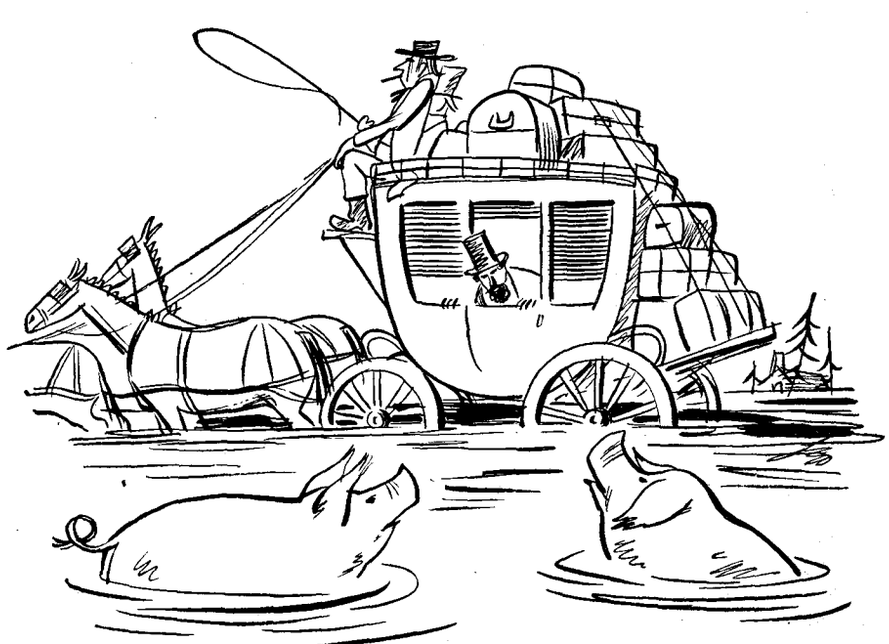
If this reviewer may also digress, he would inform the H. Allen Smith zealots that the war deprived them of an amusing satire in 1939. Smith's "Mr. Klein's Kampf" was printed and in process of distribution when the Nazi armies invaded Poland. This preposterous story of an expert mimic who passes himself off as Hitler in London and Paris was never technically published, for suddenly the strident little man with the toothbrush mustache was no longer funny, but a sickening and frightening menace to the whole world. Overnight, just before the day of publication the book became painfully out of date.

Unsullied Rimes

THE LITTLE BOOK OF LIMERICKS. By H. I. Brock. New York: Duell, Sloane, & Pearce. 1947. 117 *pp.* $1.

Reviewed by BASIL DAVENPORT

BRAVELY defying the conventional statement that all the best limericks are dirty, Mr. Brock has made a collection of limericks where, as he says, he has leaned over backward to avoid anything that might offend the fastidious, and has graced it with various bits of scholarly research into the history of the art form. It is probably true that all, or certainly most, of the best limericks, and indeed most of the best jokes, are dirty; humor rests on incongruity, and nothing is more incongruous than certain aspects of the way in which life is carried on. Or, as Bergson says, we laugh at a man acting not under the rule of his own will, but, for instance, slipping on the ice, or drunk; our more robust



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ancestors laughed not merely at the intoxicated but at the insane; and what is love but another insanity, that blinded Phaedra and lost the world for Cleopatra—and that drove such dignified characters as the Bey of Algiers, the Bishop of Birmingham, or the Magdalen Dean of Divinity (whose adventures you will *not* find in Mr. Brock's chaste pages) to their surprising adventures? But, if most of the best jokes are dirty, so are most of the worst; a dull, dirty limerick can be drearier than the Old Monk of Siberia (who, in his more discreet form, appears here); and so, as Dr. Johnson said about birching and learning, what you lose at one end you gain at the other.

Certainly, this is an entertaining little collection. It contains a few, but only a few, of the oddities that depend on spelling, and those mostly ingenious; and it is safe to say that even the most enthusiastic collector will find here some that are new to him. Everyone will have his own preferred versions, not merely from the point of view of dirt, either. Mr. Brock's

There was a young man of Hong Kong
Who invented a topical song.
It wasn't the words
That bothered the birds
But the horrible double ontong— —

is surely much more effective in the form

There was a young man of Boulogne
Who invented a topical song.
It was not the words
That frightened the birds
But the horrible double entendre— —

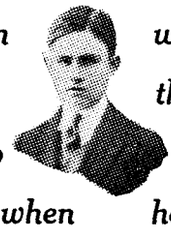
allowing the reader to bark his own shins over the French pronunciations. But this is cavilling. From the lazy-liners of Lear and the verbal ingenuities of Carolyn Wells, to Morris Bishop's contribution to *The New Yorker*, the best of the clean limericks are well represented.

Not so much can be said for the literary history involved. Mr. Brock makes valiant efforts to discover limericks in the lyrics of Shakespeare (if you take a word out of the text and make it a stage direction), in the poulter's measure, and in the iambics of Gilbert's "Grosvenor Gallery" songs, none of which, frankly, will do. The surprising thing is that one of the sections into which these verses are divided, according to subject-matter, is headed "Dealers in Magic and Spells" — from Gilbert's "Sorcerer's Song," which *is* in pure limericks. And if Mr. Brock had remembered his Stalky, he would have found two pieces of evidence in one; he hesitates to accept the refrain "Oh, won't you come, come up, come up . . . to Limerick," said to be sung between limericks at convivial parties; and he says of his French limericks merely that they are "quoted by Carolyn Wells" and probably by "the author of 'Trilby'. But *you* remember that when King challenged Beetle to mention one single fact concerning Dr. Johnson, Beetle (beginning at the second line) "proceeded with the text of an old Du Maurier drawing in a back number of *Punch*:

De tous ces défunts cockolores
Le moral Fénélon,
Michel Ange et Johnson
(Le Docteur) sont les plus awful bores.

To which Howell, wooingly, just above his breath, "Oh, *won't* you come up, come up"?

And in the back numbers of *Punch* he might have found his French limericks signed by Du Maurier, and set his doubts at rest. But he deserves thanks for having found them, in whatever source, and for adding the Gendarme de Nanteuil, the Jeune Fille de Tours, and the Marin Naufragé de Doncastre, to the Young Man of Detroit (who knew a good thing when he saw it), the Young Man of Thermopylae (who couldn't do anything properly), and all the rest of the great company with whom we happily take the road to Limerick.

In London in the Twenties, there was a gifted young Englishman  *who decided upon a literary career. The first few things he wrote were, to be as honest as he is, not so good . . . he's glad to forget about them now . . . but when he started writing about himself, and his attempts to become a writer, he turned out to be very good indeed.* **"Lions and Shadows"** *could be called Christopher Isherwood's autobiography . . . except . . . that Isherwood is so completely a story-teller he couldn't stick to the facts. His characters, who are his friends, ran away with the book and turned it into a novel. Several of these friends are now just as famous as* **Christopher Isherwood** *himself, and you will enjoy penetrating their not too heavy disguises. Their doings make reading as diverting as anything Isherwood later wrote. If you liked* "Prater Violet" *or* "The Berlin Stories" *you'll want to get to know Isherwood himself through* "Lions & Shadows." *You'll find him quite as engaging as a personality as he is exceptional as a writer.* "Lions & Shadows" *has just been published for the first time in this country and costs $3. Ask your bookseller to let you sample a few pages. That will do it.*

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cynically one might grasp the motives by which an establishment like this might be run, it remained for its old habitués one of the pleasantest places in the world." In the end her lover tells her that he is going to Europe because "I hate everything that is going on in the U. S. . . . the fat living makes me wild, the spending makes me sick," and she agrees with him: but for her there is no such escape.

"East Side, West Side" may, of course, find favor with a large public for the perfectly good reason that it describes with gusto, with vivacity, and in detail whole chunks of Manhattan life. As an animated travelogue-cum-etiquette-book it is highly successful. Few writers could do this sort of thing one-half as well as Marcia Davenport does it: though, to be sure, few serious writers would care to try. As an attack upon materialist living, which it so often pretends to be, it can hardly be called a success. With neither sufficient detachment on the one hand, nor sufficient conviction on the other, it launches itself upon one of the main streams of American fiction—indeed, one might say of American thought. But main streams are full of dangers for the innocent or the undecided navigator; and "East Side, West Side," as a serious novel, is scarcely afloat before the exacting waters run it hard aground.

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Orgy in Vermont

THE TAMARACK TREE. By Howard Breslin. New York: Whittlesey House. 1947. 438 pp. $3.

Reviewed by JOHN LYDENBERG

THIS is the Literary Guild's latest entry into the historical novel sweepstakes. The tamarack tree (larch, to the uninitiated) stood isolated in a huge clearing high on Stratton Mountain in Vermont. Here the lordly Daniel Webster made a two-hour oration before some twenty thousand Vermonters at one of the mass rallies of the frenzied log-cabin and hard-cider campaign of 1840. And the alcohol in the cider released the emotions and convention-bound inhibitions of many reticent farmers, to provide the proper romance and tragedy for this costume drama.

"The Tamarack Tree" mixes all the accepted ingredients according to the accepted formula. Several unrelated plots culminate at the great three-day orgy. A glib peddler of patent medicines makes a killing from the unwary merrymakers, and another killing at poker—but his heart of gold cannot be hidden even by his elaborate Shakespearian rhetoric. The daughter of the Congregational Minister is wooed by the son of the rich sawmill owner and the son of a sturdy farmer; not until the farmer's son has been seriously wounded in a duel are the various misunderstandings straightened out to allow true love to run into its correctly smooth channel. The duel arises from a cider-inspired misunderstanding with a very Southern Virginia Whig who has, to his surprise, been seduced by a Vermont lass whose reputed Puritanism he was gingerly testing. After the duel the correct Virginian presents his respects and hopes for a quick recovery, before riding off for a last visit to that surprising lass. The violence beneath the stolid rural surface breaks into red horror when a cuckolded husband plots successfully to catch the lovers in the violated bed and spatters their life blood upon the wall, races through the woods before an aroused posse, and is himself horribly mangled by a wounded bear. And, in a less stereotyped scene of real social significance, a drunken sawmill worker smashes to twisted scrap the glittering new circular saw that was the pride of his penny-pinching, hard-bitten employer.

Maybe that is unfair to the novel. After all, the ingredients are standard because they make a palatable cake; and when properly blended they are unobtrusive. So it is with this novel. It is pleasant, readable, and unpretentious. The characters are types, but well cast types. The backwoods atmosphere rings true, and the inescapable and versatile Vermont "E-yah" is effectively used on almost every page to accentuate the typical New England understatement.

Best of all, the political campaign is well-interpreted. The 1840 election, with its meaningless "Tippecanoe and Tyler too" chant, sets the pattern for future American elections run by and for parties of professionals. Mr. Breslin shows clearly the excited partisanship of gullible voters; the cynically effective slogans, songs, and rumors invented by the managers; the demagogic appeal to the poor man to support a party organized by the bankers and industrialists; the bread and circuses obscuring if not obliterating the real issues.

Mr. Breslin has steered a safe course. Because the novel makes no pretense at literary or political significance, it cannot justly be criticized for its manifest shortcomings on those scores. Because the romance and the melodrama are reasonably modulated,

FRASER YOUNG'S LITERARY CRYPT: NO. 231

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer No. 231 will be found in the next issue.

EDO UAZUOJJVAZJ AQ EDO

LOTW TIO EDO UAZUOJJVAZJ

AQ QOTI.—ONYAZN SCIWO.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 230

To believe only possibilities, is not faith, but mere philosophy.
SIR THOMAS BROWNE.

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the sex held within the bounds of nineteenth-century Vermont, and the familiar details of small-town life accurate and solid, the critic is not tempted to use this novel as text for a lecture on the spurious and factitious romances flooding the market.

No. 1 Boy

THE INDEFINITE RIVER. By Preston Schoyer. New York: Dodd, Mead & Co. 1947. 325 pp. $3.

Reviewed by GORDDEN LINK

PRESTON SCHOYER'S long first novel, "The Foreigners," which appeared in 1942, still ranks among the best books ever written on China. His style and his thinking have now been hardened by four more years in the Orient, principally behind the lines in East China as an air officer aiding the escape of Allied personnel. He makes of "The Indefinite River" an adventure in shared experience. To anyone familiar with Allied intelligence activities during World War II, the figure of Lieutenant Colonel Ernest L. Crump, promoted and decorated for his arrogant and consistent sabotage of American undercover plans, is frighteningly real. As are the various Chinese generals with whom Captain Davis Russell, Crump's subordinate, has to work. And the worried Navy lieutenant, liaison with the Tai Li intelligence organization, who obviously had a twin brother at every overseas station. And every old China hand carries a Nina Lee deep in his heart.

"The Indefinite River" is ostensibly the story of a quiet American lawyer of thirty-nine, stationed as an intelligence officer in an obscure Chinese town where, though the Japanese are only thirty miles away, the principal struggle is between the Kuomintang and the Communists. Davis works desperately to accomplish his mission, the collection of information about the enemy and maintenance of friendly liaison with the Chinese. But he is hamstrung by the self-interest and stupidity of his colonel, the haphazard indirection of the higher echelons, and the machinations of Chinese military politics. He bears the brunt of suspicions directed against his beautiful secret agent, Nina, with whom he falls in love. Finally he is discredited and recalled. So the chronic reader of escapist literature will be perfectly happy with all the ingredients of his standard fare. Actually, however, this is a pungent narrative of atmosphere and character in an incredible situation which the author makes casually inevitable. The keynote comes from Nina's description of the Wu Ting Ho, the indefinite river ". . . like life, nothing certain nothing definite." And in a chaotic, uncertain land, against all odds, including those of his conventional stateside background, his rigid honesty, and his overpowering love, Davis Russell tries to turn the chaotic stream of his life into "a river that reaches the sea."

Those who know the East sneer at facile books by journalists who spend a month at the Cathay Mansions in Shanghai and, if the rains come, bravely take a rickshaw across the flooded street to the French Club. They demand the real thing. They remember the fellow feeling they got from "The Foreigners" and, until the staggering bonanza of a half dozen books in one year from Robert Payne, they have been affectionately devouring magazine articles written or ghosted by Emmanuel Larsen, the Great White Father of Old China Hands. Now Preston Schoyer once more brings back everything they left behind and tells them a rousing story, to boot. Furthermore, as he pilloried the self-centered foreigners in his first book, he now, by way of premium, tilts at all military stupidity and at the venal operations of the Chinese government.

Preston Schoyer must be regarded as our Number One Boy in China fiction. He has come dangerously close to writing a great novel.

Fanny Kemble: TION" "We have read it through from title page to colophon with unabated interest." The Knickerbocker, June, 1847.

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BOOKED for TRAVEL

CHICHICASTENANGO AND THE BIG DITCH

DURING the war, when the bottom dropped out of everybody's tourist business, Panama was busy entertaining 60,000 civilian employees and GI's stationed in the Canal Zone. It was the biggest tourist boom the country ever had, and on the experience of those war years Panama decided to build a new tourist industry. The first step was to build a good hotel. A new $6,000,000, 400-room edifice will be ready in Panama City next winter. On Taboga Island, twelve miles away by motor launch, a former base for PT boats has already been converted into a tourist center with room for 350.

Plans are afoot to fly and sail tourists up among the 365 San Blas islands, which are inhabited by 20,000 San Blas Indians who wear gold nose rings and earrings. These worthies are said to be the purest bred tribe in the Western Hemisphere. To keep things that way, all strangers must be off the islands by 5:00 p.m.

Arrangements are also made to visit the Choco tribes down in the Darien jungles whom the Spaniards called tree dwellers. The Chocos have come down to earth since those early days, and now live in houses built on stilts to avoid the twenty-foot tide along the river banks where they choose to live. Choco women wear sarongs held together by a contraption of knots. Above the waist they wear nothing but paint, which is applied in geometric patterns, the designs matching those of their husbands. Only chiefs may paint themselves with triangles. Choco men wear silver arm-length bracelets, silver earrings, a buster brown haircut with black bangs, and to top it all off, a red hibiscus flower high on the head. They are active traders, the items most tempting to them being evaporated milk, salt, and five-and-ten lipsticks.

Although I can attest that my own doctor of dental surgery will fail to find the method novel, Guayami Indians who live in Chiriqui sculpture their teeth to a point by holding a rock behind each tooth, meanwhile whacking away at the edges with a chisel. Strengthens them, they say.

Panamanians, who are descendants of the Spaniards, have a culture all their own. On festive days the women still wear beautiful costumes called polleras. And in the hinterlands, as yet uninvaded by Sears, Roebuck, the men retain their montunos—fringed culottes worn with loose-fitting blouses. There are also classic tours from the Republic of Panama into the Canal Zone, a narrow strip which is owned by the republic and leased to the United States for the administration of the canal.

In Guatemala, north of Panama, and about four air hours out of New Orleans, half the population is pure-bred Indian. Guatemala City is clean and modern because it was rebuilt after earthquakes in 1917 and 1918. The country's biggest tourist attraction is Chichicastenango, which was made popular through the reputation of its famous Indian market and the lyrical tribute composed by Tin Pan Alley exposing its allure. Chichi is a hundred miles northwest of the capital via a paved road that passes such exercises in tongue and palate as Tontonicapan, Huehuetenango, and Momostenango. The elevation of the city is 6,500 feet, it was founded after a battle in 1524 by some displaced Mayans, and has a comfortable hotel called the Mayan Inn. Sundays and Thursdays are market days, a real event in Chichicastenango. Indians convene in the plaza, burn incense, wear all manner of colorful costumes, and sell everything from a table cloth suitable for a bridge and luncheon, to a bottle of aguardiente, a local Vodka as white, hot, and recalcitrant as if it had been distilled in the USSR.

HORACE SUTTON.

—*PAA Photo.*

". . . in the hinterlands, as yet uninvaded by Sears, Roebuck."

Fun in L. A.

. . . AND POINTS SOUTH. By Oden and Olivia Meeker. New York: Random House. 1947. 336 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by CASSIANO NUNES

THE DAYS seem to have gone when Europeans and hurried Americans, after short trips to Latin America, expressed brief, disdainful, and rather definite opinions about the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking American Republics. Even scholars used to write with presumption and scorn about the major weaknesses of Latin America. Fortunately, the situation today has completely changed, and the contemptuous attitude of the detractors (typified by the intellectual Gustave Le Bon) is now vehemently condemned by the true connoisseurs of Latin-American culture both in the United States and in Europe.

During the last few years many books have been published in the United States dealing with Latin America. ". . . And Points South" is different from all others for it does not pretend to be either scientific or critical. Its aim is only to capture the picturesque, the amusing, and the humorous aspects of Latin American life. I must confess that I laughed heartily while reading it.

The book's subtitle, "Ten Months

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of Slightly Irreverent Observation of Life in Latin America," explains it very well. And, for once, so does the dust jacket blurb which notes that in their ten-months' trip the "authors were feasted, intimidated, awed, fattened, pursued, bitten, over-estimated and, once, jailed. . . . They were very occasionally bored, unusually nonplussed, and continually diverted." This goes for the reader, too.

In this impressionistic book so full of gentle caricatures you may find here and there a strong commentary. The authors give a truthful account of some peculiarities and eccentricities of the Latin-American people, but the account is in no way offensive. I might add, however, that with more time and patience far more valuable material could have been collected.

There are in the lands of the South many strange and unusual things which I would have liked to see criticized, ridiculed, and "destroyed by laughter," as Eça de Queiros would say. Unfortunately, on the subject of Brazilian politics, only Congressman Barreto Pinto was picked out, a great "vaudeville" number, no doubt. The Meekers would have found ample room for fun in a Brazilian laborite, an illiterate councilman, a fraudulent election.

Cassiano Nuñes, native of Sao Paulo, Brazil, is a Pan American Airways travel fellowship winner now studying American literature at Miami (Ohio) University.

No Place Like It

THE RAINBOW REPUBLICS: Central America. By Ralph Hancock. New York: Coward-McCann Inc. 1947. 305pp. $4.

HALF WAY TO HEAVEN. By Jean Hersey. New York: Prentice-Hall Inc. 1947. 304 pp. $3.75.

Reviewed by ARTHUR GOODFRIEND

RALPH HANCOCK has written a streamlined Baedeker on Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, and Panama. He claims these Rainbow Republics "pack within their narrow borders more picturesque color, more interests for the traveler than any similar area in the world." This reviewer, recently returned from his second global voyage and, more recently, a motor tour of Latin America, does not believe there *is* a similar area in the world. That doesn't signify disagreement with Hancock's claim; Guatemala, alone, more than measures up to it.

Guatemala is what Jean Hersey describes enthusiastically in "Half Way to Heaven." Where Hancock is as terse as a bank statement, Hersey goes overboard into a lush description of personal adventures which range from a hunt for a calendar in Guatemala City—the point being that no one in Guatemala gives a hoot about time so the calendar is hard to find—to taking a bath in a resort hotel. Here she repeats the old routine about the plumbing problems cleanly Americans face everywhere in this unsanitary world, everywhere, of course, but in the USA. Mrs. Hersey had a swell time, learned a lot, met loads of interesting people and tells all in the travel-is-so-broadening spirit. She names names, hotels, prices and puts a heap of interesting facts and figures into the mouths of her Latin acquaintances who slip it to you in their quaint English.

Mrs. Hersey really got around, including Todos Santos, a Mayan hideaway in the Cuchamatanes Mountains where few Americans ever bother to go. She did, which is more than others who have written about it have done. Chief flaw in the Hersey approach is that once again Latins are dished up as queer, impractical folk, oozing the old "mañana" mood—charming, but — to be blunt about it — dumb. We wish some Latin would motor through the American sticks, and do a piece about some of our own characters and expose our own plumbing headaches. Just to even up the score.

Mr. Hancock wastes no time with personal goings on. He wraps his material into neat packages, labeled lodging, food and drink, the arts, and so on. Each chapter is heavy with meat, too much for any one meal but something to keep nibbling at along the Central American trail. It contains a lubricant for every possible point of friction; tells where to stay, what to pay, how to get along with people.

Like the Army's GI guides, "The Rainbow Republics" occasionally strays from fact or omits something important. For example, Mr. Hancock praises the letter of credit as a good way to handle the money problem. Actually it is an expensive time waster that prevents travelers from taking advantage of free exchange, generally better than the banks. He doesn't mention some of the best hotels or pensions—the Marichal, for instance, in Tegucigalpa. There is no mention of Managua, Nicaragua's most exciting sight—Cahualinca, with its footprints of seventeen Indians and a pig, baked in mud and possibly the oldest trace of man in South America. Nor does he mention, among the shopping scoops, Salvador's specialty, the miniature statues (*sorpresas*) made in Ilopango. And how he could visit Salvador and not write about its delicious *pupusas*—cheese or meat baked inside a tortilla—is a mystery that darkens what is otherwise a good, bright book.

Arthur Goodfriend recently completed a jeep tour of Latin America.

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The Criminal Record

The Saturday Review's Guide to Detective Fiction

Title and Author	*Crime, Place, and Sleuth*	*Summing Up*	*Verdict*
FOGGY, FOGGY DEW *Amber Dean* (Crime Club: $2)	Possibly natural deaths of wealthy d pso and her bibulous nephew arouse suspicions of doctor, who consults detective friend with surprising results.	Introduces new (to C. R.) murder-method, chancy but interesting. People are lively, pace fast — and title fog sometimes penetrates writing.	Entertaining
THE RED GATE *Richard Burke* (Ziff-Davis: $1.98)	Young wife (ex-café cigarette-girl) of septuagenarian millionaire naturally suspected when he's murdered. She helps foil nasty accusers.	Beyond few spots of raucous humor involving frankly depicted heroine, story is average assembly line job with ultra-gaudy trimmings.	Not so good
THE DYING ROOM *Manning Lee Stokes* (Phoenix: $2)	Veteran with possibly fatal head wound saves amnesiac heiress from burning plane, then solves two widely separated but closely related homicides.	Melodrama—but good melo.—from start to finish. Lurid, sketchy, and occasionally unbelievable, but pace and action carry it through.	Shocker
PURPLE SHELLS *R. L. Goldman* (Ziff-Davis: $1.98)	Violent deaths of two American experts in testaceous malacology convince reporter-sleuth he's up against something more serious than shell-game.	Adroitly plotted, well documented, and consistently exciting—with completely unexpected finish. Barring minor routine touches it's credible, and amply hard-boiled.	Good stuff
MEMORY OF MURDER *Hugh Pentecost* (Ziff-Davis: $1.98)	Four "long-shorts" about little, gray psychiatrist John Smith, whose professional skill leads police to solution of some puzzling crimes.	Read singly they are rewarding; sound sleuthing, ditto psychology, good writing. At one sitting psychiatry, 'though sugar-coated, is bit overpowering.	Commendable
THE INVISIBLE BRIDGE *Francis Allan* (Reynal & Hitchcock: $2.50)	Neurotic artist finds killing only way out of difficulties — and slays quite cleverly. But stupid kin of second murderee queers pitch.	Terrifying portraits of maladjusted personalities, sharp vignettes of New York scenes, good — if strident — writing and generally depressing atmosphere.	For special tastes
THE BELLS OF OLD BAILEY *Dorothy Bowers* (Crime Club: $2)	Batch of quiet-English-village suicides followed by two murders. Scotland Yarder probes all deaths and forces confession from vengeful slayer.	Blackmail, poison-pen, and black-market ingredients skilfully blended. Engaging people—almost all suspects, unassuming sleuth, and pleasant background.	Satisfactory
THE SUGARPLUM STAIRCASE *Richard English* (Simon & Schuster: $2)	Timid young insurance salesman, seeking selling ability through hypnosis, lands smack in middle of double N. Y. slaying and bothers cops terribly.	Dagwood-Blondie treatment of yarn, although it frequently gets out of hand, has its points, both amusing and exciting.	Lively
LETHAL LADY *Rufus King* (Crime Club: $2)	Murderous Enoch Arden act of money-mad Midwestern wife almost succeeds, but maniacal Minnesotan avenges one crime and prevents another.	Interesting to watch law, indirectly but surely, close in on avaricious five-letter gal. Otherwise it's just another slick shocker.	Not King-size
A DIRGE FOR HER *Virginia Rath* (Ziff-Davis: $1.98)	Murder of movie actress with checkered past, followed by two related slayings, keeps Michael Dundas one step ahead of angry cops.	Dundas's current aide—tough ex-sergeant private op.—refreshing addition to Calif. couturier sleuth's stable. Action swift, plot well tangled.	O.K.

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and government. In this country our fear of communist strength and influence in the Western Hemisphere is blinding many people to other forces which may eventually result in untold misery and suffering to millions in the Americas.

At any rate, the rising tide of nationalism in many of the other American republics and its possible consequences should be watched with the same interest and concern as we watch the communist movement. . . .

With a few swipes at Generalissimo Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molina, the ruler of the Dominican Republic, and General Anastasio Somoza, the dictator of Nicaragua, Mr. Tomlinson turns most of his attention to Juan Domingo Perón of Argentina. This particular brand of government, he says, is pure fascism in the classical pattern, aimed at conquering Latin America by force if necessary.

Notably, Mr. Tomlinson comments, Sr. Perón has been one of the loudest advocates of the hemisphere defense plan whereby the United States would arm and train Latin-American armies —"a plan loudly ballyhooed by some of our highest professional military men, including General Dwight D. Eisenhower himself." Mr. Tomlinson quotes a Congressman's remark that this plan would be like "sharpening a razor to cut our own throat."

Democratic forces, Mr. Tomlinson says, still exist between the poles of Left and Right extremists. They are vigorous, he says, but should be supported by this country with a surer hand. The methods should be refusal to grant diplomatic recognition to any government not representing a free expression of the people and the use of what he calls the "new Dollar Diplomacy." In this Dollar Diplomacy private investors would deal only with their colleagues in Latin America (and not governments) and, in addition, every United States dollar invested would be matched with native capital.

"Battle for the Hemisphere" is a journalistic bird's-eye view with all the advantages and disadvantages inherent in this kind of book. It is neatly organized, colloquially written, and sharply to the point. On the other hand, there is an inclination to oversimplicity, to exaggerate in the interests of emphasis, to cry warning overdramatically. It seems also fair to note that Mr. Tomlinson gives the impression that he agrees with the viewpoint of large United States investors in Latin America—communications, oil, mining, and fruit—a viewpoint that is not necessarily the most objective.

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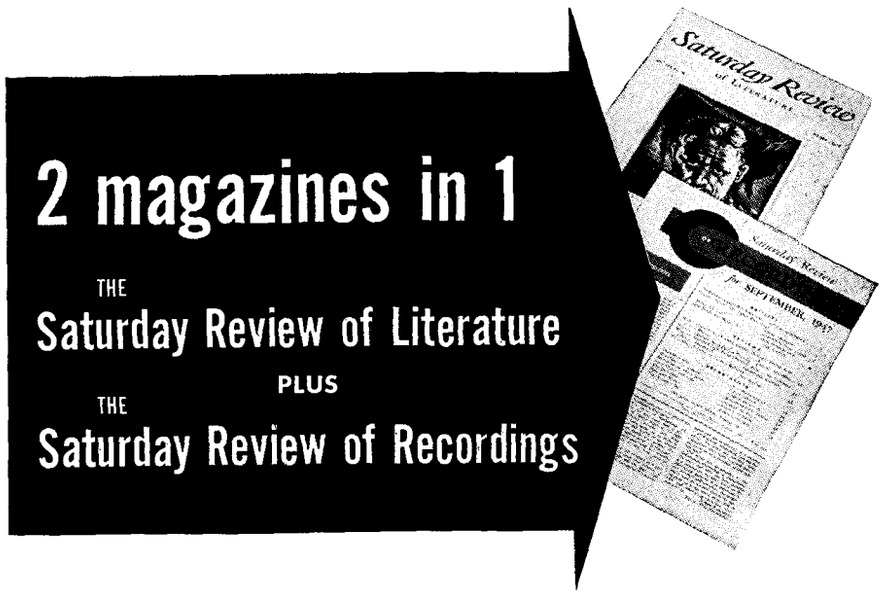

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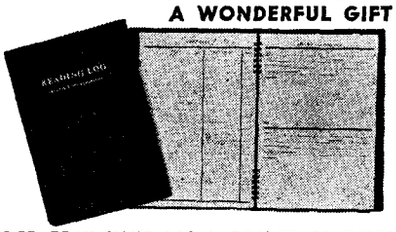

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The New Recordings

COMPOSITION, PERFORMER, ALBUM NUMBER, NUMBER OF RECORDS	ENGINEERING		PERFORMANCE AND CONTENT
	Recording Technique	*Surface*	
BERNSTEIN, "FACSIMILE" (1946). RCA-Victor Orch. Bernstein. Victor M 1142 (2) $3.30	(Note: Labels sides 3 & 4 reversed my copy.) One of Victor's finest efforts, highly natural. More liveness, less sharpness than comparable Columbias.	A	(*See below*) Glibly tense, ("neurotic") ballet music, modern, delightfully easy in the listening. Minus dance it falls apart in some spots.
BERNSTEIN, CLARINET SONATA (1941). David Oppenheim, Bernstein. Hargail 502 (2) (*Reissued*)	Recorded during war This is a reissue on better surfaces. Not up to current standards, but good enough for easy listening.	B+	A compact, urbane, highly contrapuntal, skilfully written piece, as good as later and fancier B. 1st mvt. pure Hindemith, 2nd pure Copland—the whole reeks of Bernstein! Try it.
DANCES (Violin and Piano). Bronislaw Gimpel, vl. Artur Balsam, pf. Vox 616 (4 10") $4	Vox has done it! This album is a remarkable improvement; fine, wide range, well balanced job, wonderful "presence."	A	Another of Vox's interesting potpourris-with-a-point. Good encore-type music. Fine recording makes for exceptional, lightweight listening.
FRANCK, SYMPHONIC VARIATIONS, Eileen Joyce, piano; Paris Conservatory Orch. Münch. London Decca EDA 35 (2)	It's the piano that's arresting here, with usual European percussionless, natural tone. Orch. fine too.	A	A highly persuasive version of this war horse, properly lugubrious at beginning but never overheavy

WHO WILL BE THE GENIUS?

EMPIRICALLY speaking, Leonard Bernstein is one of today's most significant composers. Not because his music is more profound than others. Not because of any greater skill in a particular branch of the art. But Bernstein has everything that, time and again in the past, has predicated the fruitful climax of a period or school of composition.

There are two sorts of creators in the furtherance of an art: the experimenters, the builders of paths; and the consolidators, who crystallize, elaborate, perfect. Genius may appear at any point, but the genius of the consolidating stage often produces the most lasting art because he has the tools, the means, the milieu. The most vital stage (ours today) is that in which consolidation is taking place—the style is set, the technique becomes facile, secure, consistent and above all, the audience is created—but the master has yet to appear. The "Pre-Bach" era had this quality as did the "Mannheim" period before Mozart. A thousand little and medium composers then busied themselves with the techniques that Mozart and Bach took over full blown, still to be uninmaginably developed.

Our century has been embroiled in the pioneer stage: the violent battles to throw over the old, the gradual development of a dozen hesitant, quarreling styles and schools (including jazz of course), then as always the quiet, post-revolution return to the best of what was thrown out; and now, finally—consolidation. The schools begin to merge, an overall contemporary style and technique is rounding out, becoming daily more familiar, more facile, easier to understand, of wider influence, bringing together the warring factions as few could have imagined twenty years ago. And Bernstein is its leading man.

In Bernstein, Copland, Hindemith, Stravinsky stalk in every measure. So does musical comedy, Gershwin, jazz hot and cold, folk song, even the neo-Romance of Prokofieff and Shostakovitch. And yet the Bernstein style is thoroughly consistent within itself and very much its own. Few living composers are the master of easy, uninhibited expression that he is, few can be so effortlessly logical, so brilliant in instrumentation, so skilled in counterpoint and line. Few can say so much so easily to the great general public. None has brought the "modern" idiom so near to the popular taste.

With the omnivorous Bernstein and his like begins, at last, the first consolidated musical art style of this century. But who will be its genius?

EDWARD TATNALL CANBY.

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HIS EYES have taken on a sharper glint
these days, and have a grim crusader's look
from too much peering into darkened corners,
or too much time with some subversive book.

He has not left a Communist in hiding,
nor any Jew conspiracy unturned;
there is no Negro plot he has not published
nor any secret code he has not learned.

His speeches echo in the Legislature,
and he is not without an audience;
his views are syndicated in the papers
(his army of disciples is immense).

Out of the spotlight, often he has doubts;
privately he disowns what he has said.

But you will find him, in the dark of night,
furtively peeping underneath his bed.

E. R. YOUNG.

* * *

From Grace Partridge Smith of Washington, D. C.:

> Apropos of the "frigidaire sweepstakes" mentioned by Earle Walbridge [*SRL* June 14, '47], I should like to call attention to the character Old Grindall in William Austin's short story "The Man with the Cloaks: A Vermont Legend," who put on a cloak a day for 365 days in order to keep warm and then complained of the cold! Slightly less chilly, perhaps, was Old Bosome in Thomas Deloney's novel, "Thomas of Reading," but he should be listed as one of the *cold* personages of fiction.

* * *

Kenneth Porter, of Vassar College, submits:

> Is the open season for duplicates, near-duplicates, and even triplicates in book titles still on? If so, may I submit the following? The most duplicated title I have recently noted is "When the Bough Breaks." Naomi Mitchison used it (1924) for her collection of stories on Roman and early-Christian themes. (Why haven't Mrs. Mitchison's last two novels, "The Blood of the Martyrs," an original treatment of the "Christian to the lions!" theme, and "The Bull Calves," about mid-eighteenth-century Scotland, been published in this country?) A novel of the same title by Cecile Gilmore appeared last year and in checking up on this I discovered that the title had been used by Adeline Rumsey in 1940. Marguerite Allis's "Water Over the Dam" (1947), about canal days in Connecticut during the 1820's, *almost* duplicates Harry Harrison Kroll's "Waters Over the Dam" (1944), one of the best "novels of the soil" I've ever read. The scene is a non-plantation region of the Deep South. Loula Grace Erdman's "Years of the Locust" (1947) partially duplicates Gilbert Seldes's "The Years of the Locust" (1932) and is also reminiscent of Nathaniel West's "Day of the Locust" (1939), about strange goings-on in Hollywood.

* * *

SUBSTITUTION

WCBS, New York, will suspend the book review program, "Of Men and Books," until the football season is over.—*Publishers' Weekly.*

Leave bookstand for bandstand,
Leave calfskin for pig.
(Up here in the grandstand
A book's *infra dig.*)

Put classics and such down,
Don't bother with bards.
(It's almost a touchdown—
Just seven more yards.)

Enough of reviewing,
However high class.
(Say, what are they doing?
It looks like a pass!) . . .

No, culture's not ended,
But just at this season
It's being suspended
For very good reason.

RICHARD ARMOUR.

* * *

After a great many years' experience as an editor, let me say this to the many writers of verse who submit material to *The Saturday Review of Literature*—and to The Phoenix Nest, its non-paying adjunct—most of which goes across my desk. Try to put yourself in the place of one whose mind is open, whose desire is to be kind, but who has to choose only those poems that, in his own opinion (subject to fallibility) are really unusual. If you send him a fat envelope full of poems that you simply fire at him without exercising any discrimination, and expect him to do all the work for you of sifting the mediocre from the good, are you putting yourself in the best light? If you send in careless work before you have really worked as hard on it as some particularly good idea may deserve, do you expect him to fix it up for you? He may, at that, because he doesn't like sloppiness. He may send it back to you with suggestions. But is he, really, a literary agency? If you act as though you were a machine turning out verses like pairs of shoes, you will not impress him save as a machine, not a poet. If you do not bother to use a typewriter or to enclose a return envelope, he will try to decipher your handwriting and he will put on the stamps when he sends the poem back, but it won't make him merry. If you suggest several endings to your poem, or several alternate lines, it just shows that you haven't enough confidence in your own judgment really to warrant your bothering an editor. I couldn't possibly say how many thousands of manuscripts of poems I have read in my time, but I should say that single poems approach the million mark. Most of the poetry comes from you ladies, and some of you only send in your best and in all other matters display your intelligence. This advice is therefore not for you. But it is obvious that *The Saturday Review of Literature* has only a certain amount of space to give to poetry, and it follows that the editors should strive to fill that space with the best poetry they can possibly get. They often fail. But it is also true that there is a great deal of verse now written in this country that attains a certain level of merit. What this editor is looking for is more than that; and owing to the amount of material that comes to his desk he cannot always say, "Your fourth line is heinous—your sixth verse is unnecessary—you've ruined a good idea—your craftsmanship is good but you have nothing original to say—you are writing too much and not working hard enough—and so on." No, he just sends the work back. Keep this anxious, hopeful, practised, and bombarded individual in mind when you send in poems. His job is to read the verse, and to try to pick out good ones. But his job is not really to teach you how to write, though he may try, now and then. And when he says unusual he means *unusual*. The flood of usual and to-be-expected is like Niagara. He tries to keep his eye peeled for that diamond chip on the endless torrent of dead leaves, that easily may escape him. Sufficit.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

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TRIPE, INC.

(Continued from page 10)

pher's model and talk like a Marquand heroine. As soon as she catches the man the story ends—just where mature adult problems begin. (There is a variant whereby a wife has to recapture her husband, but it is essentially the same thing.) There are no poor in America who do not deserve to be so, or to whom poverty is anything but a noble spur or a joke. There are no stirring moral problems dramatically presented, no recognition of the dilemma of modern man—who has discovered the instruments of abundance and peace but can only create scarcity and chaos. There are no problems that cannot be solved by a kindly and sentimental old gentleman speaking a few words of wisdom, but mostly there are just no real problems at all—only a complacent satisfaction with the status quo. Life, as presented in the slicks, is a series of harmless glandular upsets mistakenly diagnosed as cardiac and cured for good by a marriage license.

More serious then than the immaturity of what is in the stories is the immaturity of what is left out. You cannot write a seriously critical story of modern life, however dramatic, and —with very rare exceptions—expect to get it into the slicks. At a time when, if ever, we needed to have our emotions attached to some set of moral principles, the public is carefully shielded from any such engagement by a few men who control the reading of millions.

Yet, fiction, far more than fact, could arouse the allegiance of men to worthy ends. That is what it is designed to do, by providing the proper emotional stimulus. It could be doing that today in our magazines, through stories which without preaching would seriously and honestly show the consequences of racial prejudice, complacency, selfishness—which would provide right standards of conduct in a world full of deprivation and misery. For fiction is the modern substitute for the ancient bard and its responsibilities are his. Yet its powers and potentialities, once regarded as nearly sacred, are being prostituted.

The slick magazines force writers of fiction to divorce themselves from the real world, to ignore the great themes of our day which cry for treatment. A censorship which forbids a writer to speak with humorous disparagement of toothpaste for fear of offending an advertiser is perhaps only funny. It actually happened to me. But a censorship which excludes the recognition of injustice in our time, which forbids criticism of our obviously imperfect economic and social system, and which both by what it includes and what it excludes imposes upon its readers a flat, shallow, and essentially false rendering of reality—such a censorship is as bad as if it were imposed by government.

It arises out of complacence, no doubt, or out of a failure to understand that in a world standing on the brink of annihilation people must be encouraged to think even if it hurts a little. Naturally, the neutral tone of slick fiction is related to sales. Editors lose their jobs if sales drop. The truth about anti-Semitism, legislative lobbies, state politics, control of the press, and a lot of other things always offends those who are exposed. Yet strangely enough the slicks will risk offending people in articles while refusing to do so in fiction. Is it that they recognize the power of fiction to engage emotions, to make an impression that cuts deeper and lasts longer than "fact"? Yet is it expecting too much of the slicks to risk the loss of a sale when civilization is at stake?

Having said these things about the slicks, what shall we say of the pulp magazines, the movie magazines, the "comics"? Are we to inhabit without repairing the filmsy fabric of this civilization where few are civilized, and where so much wealth of goods hides so much poverty of soul, until the merest push topples us over? Or are we to discover our errors in time, so that with bone and sinew we can rebuild before it is too late?

And what should a writer do, who wants to help save and improve his world, but is only allowed to jingle the jester's bells?

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(Continued on page 50)

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PERSONALS

(Continued from page 49)

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By Elizabeth S. Kingsley

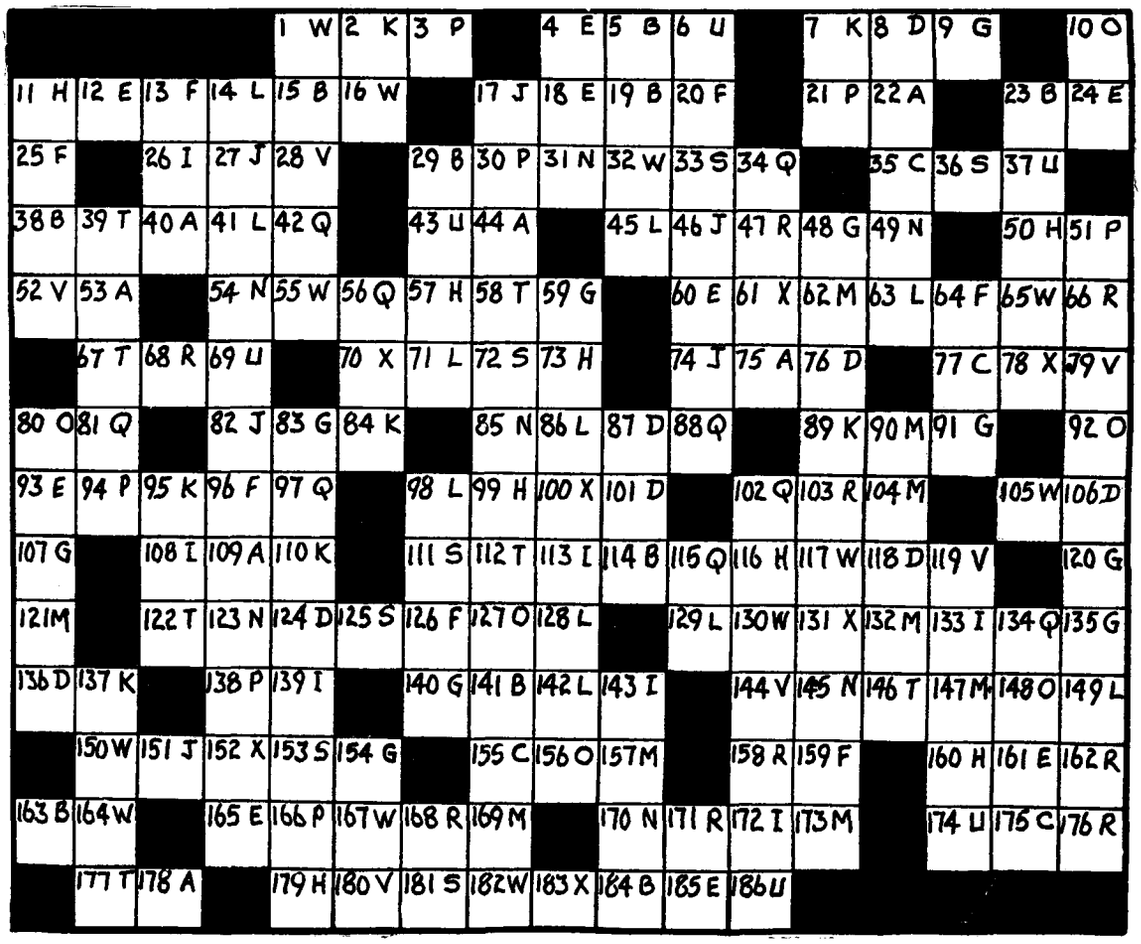
DEFINITIONS	WORDS
A. Island home in Vermont of author in Word E.	75 44 22 109 178 40 53
B. One of the three Greek orders of architecture.	163 141 114 184 15 38 5 19 29 23
C. Seaport tourist resort in Argyll Co., W. Scotland.	35 77 155 175
D. Novel by J. F. Cooper (1828).	8 118 76 124 106 87 101 136
E. American journalist, critic, actor, writer, radio broadcaster (1887-1943).	4 24 18 12 161 165 93 185 60
F. English woman poet and novelist (1820-97; "Off the Skelligs").	126 20 64 96 13 159 25
G. Gelatin pudding containing chestnuts.	83 9 59 140 135 48 107 120 91 154
H. Kind of indoor tennis game (Comp.).	160 11 57 50 179 99 116 73
I. Current actor and movie star, Academy Award 1940.	26 108 143 133 113 172 139
J. A Shilonite prophet of Solomon's reign (Bib.).	74 46 27 17 82 151
K. Distance that coal must be hauled, mine to railroad or vessel (Eng.).	2 110 89 84 7 95 137
L. Place of Byron's death (1824).	142 14 129 45 71 41 86 149 128 98 63

DEFINITIONS	WORDS
M. American political leader (sec'y of treasury in Lincoln's Cabinet, 1864-65).	121 132 147 169 173 90 104 157 62
N. Shakespearean character who "loved not wisely but too well."	123 54 170 145 85 49 31
O. First name of Becky Sharp's husband.	156 80 10 92 148 127
P. English writer whose poetry is quoted on our Statue of Liberty (1816-47).	138 94 21 51 3 166 30
Q. Relative bearing of one ship right in front of another (2 wds.; Naut.).	34 88 102 81 56 134 42 115 97
R. Curved like the letter S (Her.).	47 103 158 68 176 162 66 171 168
S. Applied to daily, current, ordinary expenses.	153 36 33 72 181 125 111
T. Current American playwright, co-author of a play acted by character in Word E.	58 39 112 67 122 146 177
U. Small river in Scotland celebrated by Wordsworth; also a common field flower.	186 174 37 69 6 43
V. Turns inside out, as an intestine.	79 52 119 180 28 144
W. Premeditation.	1 105 182 167 164 150 65 130 32 16 55 117
X. Kind of child's dress with lower part shaped like bloomers.	183 61 131 100 152 78 70

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-odd words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square of the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Read up and down the letters mean n o t h i n g. The black squares indicate ends of words; words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (second edition).



Solution of last week's Double-Crostic will be found on page 15 of this issue.

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The Last of the Provincials

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